

THE  
VICAR of BRAY:

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T A L E.

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V O L. I.

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# CONTENTS.

## CHAP. I.

**C**ONTAINS many introductory matters—peculiar marks of the Vicar's character, and some spirited exploits in which he and a friend of his are engaged.

## CHAP. II.

*New lights into the history---an exemplary young nobleman presented to the reader's acquaintance—a proof how contrary events are to our hopes and expectations, and a resolution of gallantry*

# CONTENTS.

*lantry perfectly consistent with polite principles.*

## CHAP. III.

*Very short, but necessary to be read for the proper comprehension of succeeding articles—an extraordinary piece of generosity with natural consequences.*

## CHAP. IV.

*A stage-coach adventure—the power of delicacy---an extraordinary piece of friendly finesse---the true method for a young fellow of spirit to intitle himself to figure a way in the beau monde.*

## CHAP. V.

*Farther instances of the Vicar's wisdom, policy, and address, with many natural and desirable consequences.*

CHAP.

## CONTENTS.

iii

### CHAP. VI.

*The determination of a noble earl in an affair of the heart---the Vicar's mode of settling difficult points---with other matters.*

### CHAP. VII.

*Some little description of Mrs. Arundel's merits---visitors to that lady---and moral observations---female sagacity, self-applause, and ideas of felicity.*

### CHAP. VIII.

*Mr. Windham's entrance upon political life--succeeded by a whole torrent of politics---in which the Vicar is no inconsiderable performer --and as the system is rather new it is hoped the reader will find much entertainment in it.*

CHAP.

# CONTENTS.

## CHAP. IX.

*Old grievances placed in a nouvelle point of view---a change of principles effected with great dexterity---with many other interesting particulars.*

## CHAP. X.

*A very natural consequence of a youthful intimacy --- some female singularities --- a few strokes of the pathetic---ditto in the romance way---separations---weepings---and an undeniable testimony of friendship and affection.*

## CHAP. XI.

*A reflux of politics---rural scenes---masculine vanity, resentments, and mode of revenge---with some reflexions, which the author has no bad opinion of---together with a plot in the matrimonial style, formed with great judgement.*

CHAP.

## C O N T E N T S.

### C H A P. XII.

*Some masterly performances in the path of seduction---the triumphs of vice---the humanity of gentlemen of intrigue, and some of the misfortunes to which innocence and credulity are exposed.*

### C H A P. XIII.

*Some hints for the conduct of married ladies—a specimen of English stability and gratitude---political finesse---and the accomplishment of a great scheme.*

### C H A P. XIV.

*A new mode of seduction—simplicity, and credulity, how dangerous—more politics, discontents, and public stability.*

### C H A P. XV.

*An attempt to reconcile those two great contradictions, reason and politics—a slight view of foreign proceedings—  
a com-*



vi CONTENTS.

*a compliment to a celebrated hero—  
with many other particulars.*

CHAP. XVI.

*A dreadful discovery---gentleness and forbearance how lovely--- a whole flame of politics---with a truly patriotic ejaculation of the author's.*

CHAP. XVII.

*A dexterous transition---politics considered in a rational light---a compliment to the English nation---farther pushes of the Vicar, for fame and interest---a ministerial character--the temper of Great-Britain---in a word the longest chapter in the whole work.*

CHAP. XVIII.

*Cruelty, resentment, love, and humanity displayed in their various effects, operations, and consequences, which wind up the first volume.*



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T H E  
VICAR of BRAY.

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C H A P. I.

**V**ARIOUS are the motives which have incited me to present the following pages to the publick. Great characters, in all ages, have still had their historian, or their poet, to preserve them from oblivion ; but in this generation, a number of interesting and remarkable events, in vain, solicit a commemorating pen. Biography is unpractised ; the muses silent ; nor has one person appeared disposed, or calculated

VOL. I.

B

to

2 VICAR OF BRAY.

to pay due tribute to the fame, or gratify the natural wishes of his cotemporaries.

But, whatever fate may attend the fame of heroes and ministers, the honest Vicar of Bray shall not pass uncelebrated: the *obligations* I owe him, and the consanguinity I claim with him, (for he was brother to my mother) are undeniable demands upon me, to paint him in the strongest, the most faithful colours; nor can I doubt, but his share in political transactions, and connexions with men of rank and popularity, will furnish (at least for a couple of volumes) sufficient matter of entertainment.

The birth or education of my uncle, have so little to do with his conduct, as an adult, that I shall in no degree enter upon them: and yet it may not be improper to observe, that even with the earliest dawnings of his reason, a kind  
5 of

of *subtlety* was conspicuous in his composition, not unaptly construed by his relations into a mark of extraordinary genius. The humour of those from whom he hoped to derive either gratification or advantage, was, at all times, his humour; the medium through which they chose to see causes and effects, the only one conformable to his optics: no wonder, therefore, that he had little or no acquaintance with ill success, whatever were his undertakings.

Harry Arundel (for it is proper my uncle should have some name) had an unconquerable aversion to the clerical character: but, as in the neighbourhood of his family lived a man of the first fashion, who was nearly related to his Grace of Canterbury; and, moreover, as that man of fashion happened to be Harry's godfather, he did not hesitate to engage in that particular profession, wherein it was obvious so right honour-

#### 4 VICAR OF BRAY.

able a patron could, most effectually, as well as most conveniently, serve him.

The Earl of Windham had a nephew much of the same age with my uncle, and situated with him at the same college. No Oxford youth was ever so eminent as Harry Arundel for decency of manners, propriety of conduct, and unwearied application in his studies. His friend, Mr. Windham, had too much volatility to follow his example; formed for dissipation—gay, idle, and inconsiderate—he never once remembered, that lively pursuits were not the only end of his creation.

Mr. Arundel would frequently play the monitor, and remonstrate with him on occasions of extravagance or gallantry; but, from the *conviction*, that morality, however eloquent, was not the way to a youthful heart, he never omitted the more effectual one, of not only palliating



palliating Mr. Windham's irregularities, but condescending to be aiding and assisting to the utmost of his abilities: the consequence of which was, that the gentleman's letters to his relations were filled with Harry's praises, whilst his own modestly insinuated all he wished should be believed.

The college vacations were spent at the Earl's seat, where the busy inclination of my uncle's breast was abundantly gratified. What field so fertile, what entertainment so rational as political disquisitions? and, as the Earl of Windham was a warm partisan, his house was a rendezvous for all the nobility of certain principles. Schemes were formed—correspondencies entered into, even so early as the year forty; notwithstanding, actual rebellion did not burst forth untill a much later period.

## 6 VICAR OF BRAY.

But amongst the many juvenile flights in which Mr. Windham thought proper to engage, one had liked to have proved very fatal. Within thirteen miles of Oxford lived a poor old man, whose earlier days had been passed in more prosperous scenes. Illness and affliction had borne so heavily upon him, that he must infallibly have sunk under them, if a daughter, gentle and beautiful as the human imagination can conceive, had not supported, had not consoled him. He was incapable of all means of procuring a subsistence himself: their little, yet neat hovel, and homely, yet wholesome fare, were wholly derived from her industry. She privately worked and washed for the collegians, and if disadvantageous in point of profit, her state of subordination, she could not but be conscious that her youth (whatever modest opinion she might entertain of the uncommon graces of her person) rendered it dangerous for her to receive her employment but  
from

from a second hand. Three or four years had elapsed in peace, and amiable resignation, when Mr. Windham, in a ramble, was thrown from his horse, and from principles of humanity, conveyed, by some hay-makers, to this remote habitation. Laurentia was, at the moment of his entrance, wiping the tear of anguish from the cheek of age with one hand, and feeding the helpless author of her existence with some broth she had just prepared for him, with the other. She started and turned pale at an appearance she was unable to account for; nor did the intelligence of his being a stray Oxonian, in any degree, conduce to the recovery of her composure. Mr. Windham, though greatly frightened, and bruised in several parts of his body, was inconceivably astonished at the lovely figure before him; and, as art and finess were not the least eminent features of his character, he magnified the misfortune he had met with, in order to recommend

## 8 VICAR OF BRAY.

himself the more strongly to her compassion.

Laurentia was not deficient in acts of kindness or hospitality; but she was much alarmed to find him prolong his visit, beyond what she very justly judged its necessary time. A messenger, at his request, was dispatched to Oxford. The Vicar arrived with a plentiful cargo of provisions; and, contrary to the worthy girl's notions of propriety, wishes, and inclinations, they both took up their abode with her for several days. Mr. Windham insisted upon the unfitness of his being moved in his weak condition; and the Vicar insisting upon giving his friend due attendance.

As it happened, there was an apartment entirely detached from the spot Laurentia and her bed-ridden father occupied. A thousand schemes were formed by these *spirited* young fellows, to wound the already  
ready

ready deeply-wounded, and add guilt to wretchedness; but, notwithstanding all their ingenuity, they were utterly at a loss how to proceed. The seal of virtue was on her face, and the glow of filial piety in her heart. To tempt her unsuccessfully, was to expose themselves not only to disappointment, but inconvenience; and to leave her untempted, was destructive to their darling views. The Vicar insinuated that nothing but violence—Mr. Windham shuddered at the idea, but promised great rewards if she could once be obtained for him by any methods. Having resolved to engage the good old man's approbation and confidence, by the decency of their conduct, they found no difficulty in carrying their resolution into practice; at least, to feign was never hard to them; nor were they only unexceptionable in their manners, but lulled every probability of suspicion in the old man to sleep, by affecting to



10 VICAR OF BRAY.

disregard, as far as common civility could admit, the darling of his heart.

Laurentia herself, was equally deceived into a favourable opinion of the Oxonians, and often asked them, If they were an exception to all rule? Or whether the strange reports of the principles and proceedings of the young students were without foundation? The Vicar *convinced* her, that in a great measure, that was actually the case, presenting her, at the same time, with what he conceived a happy adage, from being within the verge of her comprehension, that there was less injustice in hanging a dog, than giving him an ill name.

But though Laurentia was accessible to every species of conversation, that policy would permit them to let reach her father's ear, she early discountenanced every  
overture,

## VICAR OF BRAY. II

overture, whether social or complimentary, when unsanctified by his presence: the uniformity of her behaviour, in this respect, was the grand barrier they sought to remove; the slightest lapse would have been sufficient for their purpose: the slightest lapse never escaped her; and they were reduced to the necessity of altering their approaches.

Some medicines which the Vicar obtained from an eminent physician, on a description of the case, together with Balchen's directions, had so happy an effect upon the cottager, under this blooming nurse's tender administration, that he was once more able to bear himself to little distances, not only from his bed, but his home also. Gratitude and delight sparkled in Laurentia's eyes, and she began to conceive, that she could never sufficiently honour, or venerate such abundant benefactors.

12 VICAR OF BRAY.

These were sensations they wished to improve. As air and exercise must be of use in the restoration of health, a one-horse chair was accordingly hired by Mr. Windham, and twice a week, either him or the *worthy* Vicar gave the unsuspecting father a whirl, to the satisfaction of all parties. It was during one of these unfortunate excursions, that the destined victim was destroyed. The solitary situation of the dwelling, and the perseverance of brutality, accomplished what the nicest and most fraudulent arts laboured for in vain.

On the poor old man's return, he received the dreadful information, that his daughter was indisposed; nor had she the courage to behold his face for many days. The Vicar made a report of his own conduct, that afforded but little tranquillity to Mr. Windham's breast; nor was it an easy point to determine, whether they should stay or fly.

In

## VICAR OF BRAY.

In the midst of their suspense, a note was conveyed to them, to meet the injured creature in a field half a mile from her home. She approached them with a peculiar air—here, said she, is the wretch of *your* creation—but I come not to ask, what is not in your power to grant.—My father shall not perish, if his child can save him: let the fatal connexion be dissolved by degrees, nor leave him the smallest reason to apprehend the returns he has received for honest kindness. If you have any idea of virtue, you may form some notion of the price I have determined to pay for the security of his peace. After what has happened, it is not for me to shrink from mortification or horror. I will see and treat you as usual; your part cannot, therefore, be difficult.

Mr. Windham was exceedingly affected by her expressions and behaviour;  
—talked

## VICAR OF BRAY.

—talked of atonement, and the generosity of not prosecuting--Hold, Sir, said she, the mind that, under my circumstances, could have a thought of atonement, would not deserve even your contempt; and if there is a degree of unfeelingness beyond, it is the capacity of publishing to the world, what excites the keenest pangs of self-reproach in even the bosom of innocence. You will find I have profited by my acquaintance with you; unacquainted with you, my language would now have been only the language of truth: I have paid dear for learning to give, perhaps, forcible sounds, to what was, nevertheless, always my *sense* of the principles of chastity.

Laurentia's abrupt departure gave these friends in iniquity a moment's time for reflexion.—If you can encounter her just indignation, said Mr. Windham, I think her request ought to be complied with;



VICAR OF BRAY. 15

with; but as to me, whatever a short period may produce, I am not so hardened, at present, as to behold her.

The Vicar's soul was too callous to be shocked. Her distress had added new charms to her person; and he repaired to the cottage with *designs* perfectly suited to his nature. Their little supper passed away pleasantly, as to the poor old man's share of it, and though the tear of agony stole down his Laurentia's cheek, it was so industriously guarded, as to escape his notice.

The hour for retiring arrived, and the poor old man's pillow smoothed by the hand of duty and affection, Laurentia had hoped to relieve her bursting heart; when, to the last, the baneful confusion of those hopes, the Vicar seized her hand, and compelled her to participate the bed of  
guilt

16 VICAR OF BRAY.

guilt and cruelty.—This, cried she, this I could never have foreseen: and does the world contain so barbarous a ruffian?—My father! My father shall not be lost!—My afflictions are incapable of mitigation;—not even my father's dreadfulest anguish could heal the miseries of his child!—The miseries of his child can shield him from despair!

The exulting Vicar now thought his conquest complete; nor had he the smallest doubt, but by certain methods and gradations to reconcile her to the transfer he was pre-determined to make of her; for she officiated at breakfast, without one sigh, and even looked upon him with more composure. O frailty! frailty! said he, in a soliloquy, well may thou be deemed another name for woman!—This sweet Laurentia!—Could I have expected her to survive her well-dissembled distress?—My foolish humanity had almost

most lost me the victory, when she knelt, and so pathetically sued for mercy: yet we are not now only reconciled, but, if her pride and perverseness would allow her to make the confession, she absolutely adores me. A man of spirit has nothing to fear, if he does not desert himself.

III

This intercourse was, however, productive of a consequence, that must have ruined both father and child, if Heaven, in pity, had not spoke the former into everlasting repose. Laurentia acknowledged the benignity of the stroke, and followed him to his grave with pious gratitude. The Vicar, alarmed at the prospect of expence, persuaded himself, that this was the good time to resign his claim, in favour of Mr. Windham: But, when he came to the cottage, he found it shut up, and devoid of inhabitants; nor did he think it convenient

18 VICAR OF BRAY.

venient to be too busy in his enquiries. The wretched *Laurentia*, with a greatness of soul, unknown to what is generally called refinement, had formed her plan from the first hour of her destruction. With the little money she could collect, she transported herself to London, where she waited and provided for an alarming event, with amazing fortitude. Her industry, her civility, and prudent behaviour, made her many friends: but what would have been a blessing to millions, was an unspeakable aggravation of her suffering, the birth of a fine boy. Whatever affected only herself, she endured without one complaint: but bursts of anguish were ever the consequences of her turning her eyes on the helpless infant. She nevertheless recovered, was recommended as a servant to a gentleman's family, and the agonizing object of her solicitude placed out to her satisfaction.

With

With this family she continued many years, with all *possible* contentment, as she was unable to avoid sometimes hearing the name of him, who had caused all her misfortunes.





## C H A P. II.

THE Earl of Windham had one son whom he thought proper to send over, at a very early age, to the university at Geneva, for education, under the care of a most worthy tutor. The good man recently buried the wife of his tenderest affections, and had only one child remaining, to bless his declining days: but in that child nature seemed to have made him ample amends for every evil he had sustained. Never were features so exquisitely turned, complexion so delightful, person so elegant, or disposition and capacity so amiable and astonishing. He left her, however, at the earnest request of the Earl, to attend his son; his *poverty*, rather than his *will*, consenting to the cruel separation, and trusted, that a handsome living would have recompensed his self-denial, have enabled him to save the darling of his existence.

existence from the roughest blasts of life.

Lord Churchill's temper, abilities, and behaviour were such, that his father was perpetually receiving the most flattering accounts of him; nor were those accounts suggested by any other motives, than sincerity and justice. Lord Churchill's soul was, indeed, of that species, which seldom deigns to inhabit the breast of mortality. Tenderly attached to his tutor, he added all his experience to the vivacity of youth, and blended the philosopher with the most elegant accomplishments.

Lord Windham, unable longer to deny himself the pleasure of beholding and conversing with such a son, in his two-and-twentieth year, commanded his return to England. The amiable student quitted his young friends with a sigh, and reluctantly exchanged the calm satisfaction

22 VICAR OF BRAY.

tion of retirement, for the noise, the splendor of life. He arrived, accompanied by his reverend friend, safe at his father's seat, where that gentleman remained only three weeks, and had scarcely embraced the object of his fondest affection, before he was attacked by a violent fever, which carried him off in a very short period. His pupil, with an affection little inferior to filial, watched over him to his latest moment; and when deprived of him forever, became wholly inconsolable. Arundel and Mr. Windham were enjoined by the Earl, to exert themselves for Lord Churchill's amusement; but they did not sufficiently understand the wounds of sensibility, to be capable of healing them.

Lord Windham, though on the verge of his grand climacteric, piqued himself not a little upon his taste for amour. The pretty orphan he had engaged to protect, and received, at the hands of  
her

her departing father, with the peculiar solemnity of such an occasion, was beheld by him with unwarrantable approbation;—he was not the madman many had proved themselves in an hour of dotage:—he abjured every thought of matrimony,—yet, was the sweet Clara marked down for his own: and, in order to secure himself from what he conceived a very natural consequence, the rivalry of his son or nephew, he committed her to the care of the trusty Vicar, untill a year or two should give her to maturity, and furnish him with a convenient opportunity for accomplishing a most diabolical purpose. The Vicar advised (and his advice was held most good) that Lord Churchill should be deceived into a belief, at the first probable period, that she did not long survive her father, as it would otherwise be impossible to prevent his frequently visiting the dear remains of that most valued friend. Accordingly, in about six months afterwards,

a let-



a letter, of the Vicar's writing and manufacturing, did arrive with the melancholy news of the lovely Clara's being dead, and was soon succeeded by another, with the particulars of her burial, at the place to which she was sent for education; and Lord Churchill could only give a few tears to her memory.

Infatuated Britain was now lifting its arm against its own peace. My uncle's knowledge of the political world, forcible language, plausibility of appearance, with a thousand other requisites, did not fail to recommend him as a treasure, to a party that was rearing its head for the most desperate attempts. The clamour was almost universal—the lawful heir should be reinstated—the foreigner driven out: Mr. Arundel joined, and, in no small degree, contributed to increase the confusion; but, as it was ever a maxim with him, that *discretion* was no less the better part of politics than of valour,  
his



his proceedings were sly, deep, and inscrutable.

Lord Churchill, who was for reducing every thing to the standard of reason, could not properly be said to belong to any party. The constitution of England was too happy a one (and happiness and propriety were, with him, synonymous terms) not to be high in his estimation. A rigid lover of justice, he was, nevertheless, firmly attached to the Brunswick succession, nor could he think how it was possible for the most uninformed mind to balance a moment in determining, that the religion of a prince, if not correspondent with the religion of a people, (however incontestible his other pretensions) was an insuperable obstacle to their receiving him for their king. Surely, he would frequently say to the Vicar, in an hour of privacy, the madness, the folly of mankind, were never more strongly evinced than on the present oc-

caſion. To be diſſatisfied with the mild adminiſtration of a monarch, whoſe education and principles are ſo truly unexceptionable; becauſe not born on the very *ſpot* with themſelves; yet, in order to redreſs the grievance, inviting the hazardous rule of one both born and bred, not only in a foreign country, but in the very boſom of our mortal enemies; and who has embraced the Romiſh tenets, publicly embraced them, even at the period of his claiming a proteſtant government for his birth-right. You know, Mr. Arundel, he would add, I abjure all party prejudice, and that reaſon alone is the barometer of my ſentiments. That our never-failing friends the French ſhould take every meaſure to interrupt our tranquillity, I can eaſily comprehend; but, that we ſhould join hands with them, againſt ourſelves, is, I confeſs, a ſpecies of infatuation above my utmoſt capacity. That the object of this country's unmerited diſapprobation, is  
incapable

incapable of infringing the minutest stipulation, this country has abundantly experienced: but what security, my good Harry, can our malecontents obtain, that their favourite fugitive will be equally tenacious of his faith and engagements? Mr. Arundel, by significant shrugs and a peculiar animation of aspect, perfectly subscribed to all his lordship's arguments, though the succeeding moment found him principal agent on the opposite side the question.

Rebellion having once erected its standard, soon became formidable. A disorderly set of troops, under the conduct of an unpracticed leader, were advancing into the very heart of the kingdom; but it was not those undisciplined troops that struck the panic; it was an apprehended reinforcement from abroad, that terrified the friends of liberty, the friends of religion. The Earl of Windham was amazingly active in the Stewart interest;

may, he was, indeed, almost the only English nobleman that was steady to his principles : fear or conviction operating so powerfully on every other heart, that though a young man had been invited, and incited by the warmest encouragements, to resume the claim of his ancestors, that young man was left, on his arrival in a strange land, to distress and discomfiture.

But, notwithstanding Lord Churchill's sentiments secured him from all political engagements, his humanity would not suffer him to be an unconcerned spectator of their effects. Immediately on the unhappy *adventurer's* defeat at the battle of Culloden, dejected, broken-hearted, and friendless, he was sought out by that young nobleman, from the most exalted motives. His religion, his precarious claim, the miseries he had brought upon a deluded people, were, in this exigence, wholly forgotten, and  
alive

alive only to his misfortune; his lordship's utmost abilities were exerted for their relief; by his humane hand was he conducted safely to a ship, in which he embarked from a country, where he had repaired on the strongest solicitations, and where he had been most cruelly abandoned by his partisans.

This generous purpose effected, Lord Churchill, happy in his own consciousness, returned to the habitation of his father.





## C H A P. III.

**B**Y some extraordinary means or other, Lord Churchill's extraordinary act of benevolence and humanity reached the knowledge of that family wherein Laurentia had found an asylum. Her constitution was far from being in the vigour, health, innocence, and peace had found it; and she hourly trembled for the fate of that child, that was at once the object of her horror and tenderness. Though she herself would have perished, rather than have derived subsistence from that source, she knew the Vicar was a rising man;—and, as it was impossible to pronounce for the choice of the unjudging and unintelligent, she at last persuaded herself, that she ought to give the child a chance, for striking him at some future hour with conviction and repentance, and reaping the benefit of his possessions. Having revolved this  
idea

idea in her mind for some time, it became confirmed into an idea of an absolute duty, —though it must be confessed that that would never have been the case, if the appointment of an American government had not compelled her to either quit a most eligible situation, or tear herself from maternal attentions. Lord Churchill, as fame will transpire, appeared a fit instrument for her desired purpose—to him, for the sake of the cause she had at heart, whatever sentiments she might inspire him with, of her seeming guilt, she resolved to conceal the deep-laid villainy of the father, lest the innocent son should be a sufferer.

Having made it her business, though not apparently, to enquire into his connexions, she soon discovered, that he occasionally visited at no great distance from where she lived; a man hired for the purpose brought her intelligence when

he was expected; nor did she fail to prepare herself for the trying interview.

Early one morning, as Lord Churchill was, agreeable to his custom, going to walk in the garden, he was informed, that a decent, though inferior person, intreated to speak to him;—the ear of goodness is ever open—he flew to learn what generous or humane action was within his power, with as much eagerness, as many would have betrayed to escape every distressful application.

My lord, said the poor girl, confidence such as I have assumed admits of no apology.—You know the Vicar of Bray—a fine, but wretched boy, not capable of providing for himself, has the tenderest of claims upon him;—but I, no less culpable in the first than succeeding

ing instance, have, by my management, secrete<sup>d</sup> him hitherto from his knowledge; nor am I certain, that my testimony would now be sufficient to obtain him the essential protection of infancy. Would your lordship but condescend to see him, - his helpless condition must search your heart, and, in return for the services *he* might receive, the mother, as you cannot but despise her, will, from this hour, cease to profess herself such, and the poor boy be disposed of just as you may see best.

Lord Churchill was equally surprised at the address, expressions, and mode of proceeding in the woman before him.— There is something so singular, madam, said he, (having recovered himself) in the affair that I own, I feel myself inclined to comply with your wishes—tell me where I shall find the little innocent—to refuse him the kind offices of humanity, would

be doubly cruel, because—I have, however, no right to sit in judgement upon the self-accused—let me have a direction to your child, and if a few guineas will—

*I feel* the charitable meaning of your words, but have not one necessity to plead.—I shall leave England in a few weeks, and have only to add, that if any turn in life should enable me to explain myself more clearly, without injuring where I ought to save, you shall hear of me again, otherwise, the first will be the last personal trouble I shall give you.

Lord Churchill could not suppress his curiosity with respect to beholding his young dependent. He therefore, early the next morning, paid a visit to the nurse, and clapping a handsome fee into her hand, entertained himself with contemplat-



templating the beauty of a countenance, where sweetness and expression were irresistibly blended; above two hours did he indulge himself beyond whatever can be imagined or described—to cultivate the tender mind—to lead on the deserving, to reputation and happiness, appeared to him the highest of mental gratifications, and he soon considered himself as the obliged party, from repeated visits, and no less repeated careffes. The boy, now turned of nine years old, was by no means deficient in tokens of love and gratitude.—He was put to a public school, accommodated in quite a new stile, and the appellation of *little friend*, fondly bestowed upon him by his good-natured benefactor.

If keeping the mother's secret would have been a disadvantage to the child, it must not have been lodged in Lord Churchill's breast; but as he could not

see the difference between his taking care of an object that delighted him, or giving him up to the care of an, at best, uncertain father, except, that in the former instance, the child would retain a known good, in the latter, acquire a precarious one ; he was resolved never to reveal it, unless upon some uncommon emergency.

The mother continued in England, until perfectly satisfied of the success of her innocent scheme, and then, with a heart at ease, embarked for Jamaica, as her departure could be productive of no calamity to the lovely child, who had the misfortune to owe his existence to her uncommon filial attention.

The nurse would have been very malicious if she had had the power, for she was really fond of the boy, and regretted his loss, which she imputed to the  
pride

pride instead of friendship of his Lordship, but as that gentleman's age would not admit of a scandalous construction, she was obliged to sit down unrevenge.



## C H A P. IV.

**T**HE blow the rebels had sustained, having either cooled their courage, or convinced their understandings, produced a calm that was but ill-suited to my uncle's restless spirit. The Culloden hero was now the general idol. Lord Churchill, from principle, publicly declared in his favour, but, from the apprehension of injuring his temporal interests, though he more than once bowed his knee, Harry Arundel's voice was never distinguished amongst the adoring multitude.

Mr. Windham, whose vivacity was ever hurrying him into scrapes, from which nothing but the ingenuity of my uncle could extricate him, contrived, however, to find him a new employment.

One morning, by way of frolick, having prevailed upon Lord Churchill to accompany him, he gave the politicians the slip, and putting himself and cousin into the Windsor machine, paid a visit to the metropolis, and was re-conveyed to the forest in the evening. But most unfortunately, even in that short absence, both the young gentlemen contracted impressions, that were not altogether so consistent with their repose. Love had ever been with Mr. Windham an ideal passion—nay, it was his *grand fort* when disposed for mirth and witticism—a mere stage-coach adventure taught him a very different lesson, and awakened susceptibilities on his companion's part, which, till then, had been unknown to him.

In the corner of the carriage was seated a sweet girl, in all the bloom of eighteen;—her unaffected innocence, her amiable reserve, the elegance of her person, and the elegance of her sentiments,



ments, (for she was, on some occasions, unavoidably drawn into conversation) filled each of their breasts with involuntary admiration. Confident and voluble as Mr. Windham had always found himself when in the company of the fair, it was very wonderful to him to feel a kind of instinctive necessity for regulating his expressions and behaviour by the nicest rules of delicacy.—She declined his offered hand at their several baitings, disregarded his assiduities, and smiled contempt upon his compliments.—One moment he adored, the next he cursed her dignity, but resolved to trace her out to the remotest part of the world.

This resolution was, nevertheless, defeated. The unexpected appearance of the earl, as they were alighting at a little inn, obliged them to make a precipitate retreat; and, before they could summon my uncle to their assistance, their beautiful fellow-traveller, and an elderly  
 I woman,

woman, who accompanied her, had quitted the place without leaving a single ray of intelligence behind, as they were totally ignorant of her name or destination; a significant sigh only escaped Lord Churchill on this disappointment; but Mr. Windham was inconceivably disconcerted—his accomplishments unable to captivate a plebian heart—he vowed revenge, and gave my uncle instant commission to spare neither industry nor expence in discovering the fair offender.

Alarmed at this uncommon agitation of Mr. Windham's spirits, and the no less uncommon earnestness of his solicitations, my uncle thought it his duty to compose the one, and, if possible, elude the other. He therefore entered into a most rational as well as conscientious conversation on the subject of sudden and improper attachments, begging Mr. Windham, while he remembered what  
was.

was due to his own character, not to forget the honour and humanity to which unprotected innocence had an unquestionable claim. Mr. Windham's ear bid defiance to all his arguments; and, at length, finding nothing would recommend him to approbation, but a compliance with his wishes, Mr. Arundel set to work, nor worked in vain. The destruction of the pretty cottager was wholly forgot by these gentlemen of *spirit*, though the Vicar had his private determinations, never again to proceed the lengths he did upon that occasion.

The lady found my uncle was not long unconvinced, that her charms had, in no degree, been exaggerated in his friend's description of them, for she was more "than paintings could express, or youthful poets fancy when they love." Her fortune was rather an humble one, though independent; a mother, and a sister some years

years younger than herself, all the relations she could boast; and a refined sensibility the amiable (however painful) characteristic of her nature.

It has already been observed, that Mr. Windham's age and my uncle's were nearly similar:—can it then be extraordinary, that so much loveliness should inspire him with similar sentiments?—next to the little Clara, she was the handsomest creature he had ever seen; and, as Clara was then only twelve years old, and the sacred deposit of friendship, he had never dared form a view incompatible with that *noble friend's* schemes respecting her;—but in the case of Miss Wentworth, he could not conceive himself under the same ties, or because he honoured and revered the nephew of his patron, and most sincerely wished to serve him, he should not remember, that to give happiness to his own heart, was a still nearer concern.

Yet



Yet powerful soever as he might experience the tender passions, he had upon this, as on every other occasion, a more *politic* motive of action, than would have been prudent to trust beyond his own breast—What might not a handsome wife do for her husband?—a wife previously beloved by the author, the source of all his pecuniary blessings, and prospects of advantage; for from the peculiarity of Lord Churchill's disposition, he had ever hailed Mr. Windham as the rising sun of his ambition; he therefore exerted all his recommendatory arts—gave the fond apprehensive mother a generous intimation of the *lively* Mr. Windham's *tendre* for his daughter (consequently himself a claim to her gratitude) and, by a judicious display of his native and acquired excellences, during the *very* period Mr. Windham believed him wholly devoted to his interest, he so won upon Mrs. Wentworth's approbation, that she consented to bestow her Sophia upon him, provided  
her



the daughter's inclinations were not repugnant to her mother's choice.

Having been thus far successful, he was casting about for a means of turning Mr. Windham's thoughts on some new object; when he was agreeably surpris'd, to find that work accomplished without his assistance. Mr. Windham had yielded to the persuasions of the earl his uncle, to prefer interest to love, that earl assuring him, that marrying a lady he had provided for him with a no less fortune than fifty thousand pounds, would be the most certain security for little *indulgences*, where, at future periods, the heart might be more immediately concerned; the fifty thousand pounds was not to be resisted, and the union was soon after effected, to the general satisfaction of all parties.

But however fortunate in this article,  
my uncle soon found his difficulties in-  
crease

crease upon him; Miss Wentworth's personal and mental accomplishments had made a lasting impression upon Lord Churchill's heart; and now that he found himself at liberty by his cousin's instability or avarice to declare his sentiments, he pressed the Divine so closely to plead his cause with that amiable girl, in the course of a little excursion into which he had purposely drawn him, that the *pious* gentleman felt it incumbent upon him, from the friendship and gratitude he bore his patron, to acquaint him with the predicament his son was under, in conjunction with an humble hint, that some more suitable alliance would be his best protection against every such species of impropriety.

The Earl of Windham received this important piece of intelligence in the very manner my uncle wished; extolled his conduct, promised rewards, and invited his son home unattended by  
Arundel,

Arundel, but without betraying the most distant insinuation of his own motives, or Harry's breach of confidence.

Lord Churchill, who knew nothing of disobedience to the commands of a father, having again and again besought Harry to be mindful of his happiness, left him to pursue his own at the expense of truth, of honour, and violated friendship. But notwithstanding Mr. Arundel ventured great lengths with Mrs. Wentworth, he had never had the temerity *absolutely* to solicit the young lady's acceptance of him. The apprehension of Lord Churchill's displeasure, and the influence he might have over Mr. Windham, was no small weight upon his spirits. While the earl lived he knew he should not only be justified, but applauded for the steps he was taking, as with little difficulty he could persuade his lordship that he married Miss Wentworth merely to preserve

preserve *his* family from disgrace ; but the question was how to settle the point with his successor, in case of that mortality alike attendant on the peer and peasant.

From this embarrass he was most happily, as well as most unexpectedly relieved, by a summons from the earl to accompany his son on an Irish expedition.

Lord Windham had it seems, according to Harry Arundel's advice, for some time cast about for a daughter-in-law ; but as his son had, on numberless occasions, betrayed more sentiment than was consistent with the character of a courtier, he was not without the dread of his making moral objections to receiving the hand of one lady, when his romantic affections were devoted to another ; he therefore concluded it the wiser scheme to dispatch him to Ireland on an important commission, where he had hopes  
his

his flame would soon expire in dissipation or vanity.

Mrs. Wentworth was greatly affected at the necessity for Mr. Arundel's hasty departure, for she had flattered herself with securing a valuable protector, in the husband and the brother, for both her daughters before the misfortune of a maternal loss should reach them.—Harry appeared to sympathize with her in all her concern, though his heart secretly exulted in so unhoped for an opportunity for forming his train of future action, with respect no less to safety than utility; and having acquitted himself in the parting scene with his usual dexterity, and sufficiently imposed upon the unsuspecting natures he had to deal with; he soon arrived at the earl's seat.

Lord Churchill, who was impatient to enquire after the sweet girl he had seen only to regret, led my uncle the earliest

VOL. I.

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moment



moment possible into a private recess of the garden; where he received such discouraging accounts of his labours, as determined him to cease his pursuit; notwithstanding his partiality, which he mistook for reason, whispered, that she, of all women, was best calculated to make him happy.

The Vicar had orders to visit the little *exile* before his embarkation, and prepare her to give his lordship the reception of a second father; he did so, and as innocence and gratitude are common inhabitants in the same bosom, the beautiful child professed herself impatient for the interview; the Vicar's malignant soul felt a pang, that such an angel should be reserved for any other *wretch* than himself, though utterly incapable of every gleam of principle or compassion.

## C H A P. V.

**I**N Ireland, no less than England, did my uncle distinguish himself in a most extraordinary manner; his friends were numerous, his reputation extensive; and all effected merely by a happy observation of the great St. Paul's maxim, who did not scruple (but for a very opposite purpose to whatever the Vicar's heart was capable of) *to become all things to all men.*

Among many notable strokes, Harry Arundel was at length tempted to perform a masterly one. The yacht which conveyed Lord Churchill and him to Dublin, had by the consent of that nobleman several other passengers on board. It was Mr. Arundel's custom to treat all strangers with polite familiarity.—A widow lady professed herself

highly pleased with his conversation and person: the widow lady had fortune and family to recommend her to attention; Miss Sophia Wentworth only unsubstantial prospects: consequently, though he had made some strong declarations of attachment to the earl of her mother, Miss Sophia *could* never be admitted as an impediment to his paying his devoirs to a new acquaintance. Besides, was not Miss Sophia beloved by his young patron? and if the earl was but once out of the way, he did not see (in his present humour) why the generous wish of his heart might not be accomplished; or should that amiable young gentleman be born for disappointment, that disappointment ought surely to reach him unaggravated by the hand of a perfidious friend.

Having made the lady repeated visits, and obtained *full* satisfaction respecting her

her circumstances, he came to a determination to open the affair to Lord Churchill.

Accordingly the very next morning at the breakfast table, having adapted his countenance to his subject, as he was most capable, he began as follows :

Though there is no species of deceit, my lord, that can be compatible with friendship, yet it is not impossible but the best friends may be induced to temporize on some occasions.

Arundel, returned his lordship hastily, have you ever deceived me ?—I own there is one piece of deceit that would nearly affect me.

However your lordship may have been deceived, said Mr. Arundel, you have never been injured ; to oblige the earl your father, and save you from a

matrimonial persecution; though I discovered, I have hitherto concealed the place of your fair fellow-traveller's residence.

Be perfectly explicit, cried his lordship eagerly, that your present ingenuities may atone for past ——

You are warm, my lord, returned Arundel, with the most artful composure, yet do I by no means merit your displeasure; if I had married the lady in the clandestine manner your father suggested ——

You should, exclaimed his lordship, have answered it with your life! My lord, my lord, returned Arundel, interrupting him, this is but a poor return for faith, and perhaps hard-practiced self-denial, for Sophia is a most divine creature.— I would tell you, that so far from meaning to regulate my conduct by Lord Windham's



Windham's wishes, or (dealing out a hypocritical sigh) as I have already observed, too probably my own inclinations, I am now on the very point of marrying the widow Fleming.

And so Mr. Arundel, said his lordship, —but it is no matter—I committed the cause of my heart to the care of friendship—I have it seems, however, very different obligations to that friendship, than I either expected or sought for.

Do we break hands, my lord, demanded Arundel with suppressed confidence, or is our union to receive additional confirmation? will you accept of my services? be properly cautious, nor, by undue wrath, disappoint your own wishes: the lady shall be yours, though I should be the instant sacrifice; for I perceive your father's deviation from the *letter* of justice and paternal

D. 4.                      tenderness

tenderness will much sooner be forgiven, than the behaviour of a man who has been cruel, only to be kind.—Ambition is his plea; yet will that ambition with all its effects meet with pardon, while your real, your proved friend remains the object of your resentment.

Arundel, cried Lord Churchill, quite melted down to his purpose, I am satisfied, I thank, I esteem you ——

Mr. Arundel did not fail to make his advantage of this moment of credulity and honest softness; he gave the colour he wished to the whole transaction; and was so far successful, that he received the widow in a few weeks from his lordship's own hand, as a testimony of his reconfirmed cordiality; and the Vicarage of Bray becoming vacant, that young nobleman anxious to atone imaginary injustice, obtained it for his favourite;

favourite ; who, on his part, affected to receive it with the most grateful humility.

Impatient as Lord Churchill was to return to England, he suffered himself to be governed intirely by the faithful Vicar ; who having formed some very advantageous as well as political connexions in that country, was for ever furnishing some undeniable plea for their continuance ; all of which, however, he constantly closed with the strongest assurances, that Sophia would be as attainable in a few months as at that actual period ; and that both her heart and person should infallibly be his.

But notwithstanding this repeated encouragement, where Sophia was the object, he could have wished Lord Churchill to have made a very different election. Mrs. Arundel had a niece, whose accomplishments were by no means inconsiderable, and whose person was

really charming.—A title has an agreeable sound:—My niece Lady Churchill was what this kind relation wished to have it in her power to pronounce, nor was Miss Needham either ill instructed or deficient on her part.

His lordship, however, had a mind incapable of being subdued by superficial perfections; he treated Miss Needham with infinite politeness, but evinced the impossibility of her exciting his admiration; yet, as whilst he was unmarried, they did not chuse to despair, they chose to preserve him in that unengaged state to the last practicable moment. The Vicar, who never saw a woman without forming designs upon her, nor never succeeded in his attempts without abandoning her to the complicated miseries of distress, poverty, guilt and disgrace, could not secure himself from some vague undigested schemes with respect to his lively relation; but as the  
chances

chances were against him, he contented himself for the present, with only promoting her visiting England, a point that he had no difficulty in carrying, as it was previously settled by the ladies, that they would not part on that side the water. As Miss Needham's fortune was small, her vanity was greatly mortified at the apprehension of not appearing to such advantage in the English *beau monde* as she could wish; but her uncle understanding her distress, represented it so ludicrously to his lordship, that an elegant and nobly presented compliment was the consequence, and she enabled to figure away to her utmost ambition. Many people would call these little finesses by a reproachful name; but the Vicar, and, after the Vicar's good example, all his family were superior to those ridiculous feelings, sensibility and sentiment are productive of; they did not take the airy for the substantial, or gratify their imaginations with fairy



dreams. I shall not, however, presume to enter the young lady's wardrobe, though I own I have a peculiar pleasure in displaying his lordship's munificence, or swell out a single page of this important history with a catalogue of female finery ; but on the other hand, I could not have answered it to my principles as a faithful historian, to have omitted a circumstance that throws so much light into all the characters of this triumvirate, and must be exemplary to generations yet unborn. Would we teach the arts of prosperity to our children, we must teach them to subdue every idea of refinement, and to consider nothing mean that is profitable, nothing contemptible but a desertion of their own interest.

## C H A P. VI.

THE Earl of Windham did not fail to wait upon his intended victim at the time appointed; he had not then seen her for near three years, and it was with inexpressible delight and astonishment that he beheld her increased perfections.

She was now entering her fifteenth year, tall, and finely accomplished. She had the artlessness, the sensibility, to bedew the hand of her beloved father's patron with her tears; the tears of filial tenderness, the tears of genuine gratitude.—Lord Windham was charmed with her simplicity; and intreated that every shadow of anxiety might be forever banished from her gentle bosom: that in him she should find a full compensation for all the losses she had sustained; for that the protection of a  
father,

62 VICAR OF BRAY.

father, and the fond indulgence of a mother, should be all united in the character of friendship; nor would his fortune be ever truly enjoyed but when employed in her service. He expressed no small approbation of the Vicar's choice of so happy a retirement for his little *charge*, and begged she would accustom herself to communicate all her wishes, to save him from the painful apprehension of her having one wish ungratified.

The more he conversed with his *Clara*, as he repeatedly called her, the more he found he was escaping from himself.—It was absurd, it was contemptible to think of marrying; and yet, could the whole world produce such a countess as he had it in his power to create?—In short, there was such an air of virtue around, that his heart instinctively acknowledged its divine influence; the idea of impossibility deterred him from  
all

all attempts; and he vowed when he took his leave, not to add so heinous a sin to his *catalogue* as the destruction of nature's most finished work.

Fraught with this generous resolution, as the pride of nobility taught him to deem it, not once recollecting that the title of countess could ill balance his age and infirmities, and more especially to the unaspiring and cultivated mind, he impatiently wished for the Vicar's advice and assistance; and the Vicar having exhausted his whole fund of delays, was not able much longer to prevent his revisiting Berkshire: but that reverend gentleman, in his way to Lord Windham's seat, took it in his head *ex officio*, whilst Lord Churchill stepped aside to exchange a few friendly salutes with an old school-fellow, to look in upon the lovely girl.

He

64 VICAR OF BRAY.

He found her improved beyond his utmost expectations; nay, he soon found also that it was impossible for either his wisdom or his piety to secure him from impressions wholly incompatible with his trust.—Gallantry, next to avarice, was however, as I have already observed, Harry Arundel's predominant passion, and he vainly urged all that propriety and principle (a species of propriety and principle little inferior to infernal) could suggest to retain his faith, though by the sacrifice of his most darling inclination; Harry Arundel's darling inclination would not be so *poorly* silenced; and he at length yielded to the more powerful spring of action, and resolved by some method or other, to defeat the evil designs of his patron, for the *good* purpose of carrying the recent ones formed by his own baseness into execution. But as he was sensible that it was a work of danger, he prudently determined that  
it



it should be a work of deliberation; and therefore made no other advantage of this interview, than taking the measure of the soul he had to deal with; whose many fine lines were apparent, from being strongly marked by the finger of virtue; but if delicacy produced nice apprehension, ingenuouſness made a blessed opening for deceit; and as to undertake was but another name with him for accomplishing, he was far from quitting her in the torments of despair.

In a short time after his arrival, he thought proper to wait upon Mrs. Wentworth, who received him with the greatest pleasure, and declared herself ready to confirm their former treaty, and receive for her son-in-law, the man who had abused her confidence.

After a very artful conversation, in which the Vicar had lamented that our inclinations were not in our own power,  
he

he began at length to come more immediately to the point. Notwithstanding, my dear madam, said he, I was so happy as to recommend myself to your approbation, it was not possible for me not to perceive long before my embarkation for Ireland, that Miss Sophia's sentiments of me were not equally flattering. It has cost me infinite pain, but what is it we will not accomplish for those we truly love? to know myself not the man of her preference was sufficient to determine me to return her friend alone; she may now, my good madam, behold me without apprehension,—the conflict is past—the formidable lover, as she I dare say considered me, totally subdued:—to deliver her delicate mind from the soft persecution of persuasion, and save her a compliance that would have wounded her peace (all unable as I was to answer for my own resolution) I have, by uniting myself to another, secured us both from danger.

Mrs..

Mrs. Wentworth, in whose breast artifice and deceit had never dwelt, received this information with a tear of regret;—the more she admired his generosity and disinterestedness, the more she was concerned that her daughter had lost him; but that she might spare him a painful participation of her disappointment, she called the daughters of her heart to welcome their common friend.

The Vicar was not in any degree mistaken, in regard to Miss Wentworth's impressions of him; her soul refused acquaintance with him; but such was the gentleness of her disposition, that however her sensibility might have been wounded, she could not have opposed maternal authority; and as her mother's voice was her actual destiny, had that mother decreed, she had become his victim.

Miss.

68 VICAR OF BRAY.

Miss Louisa Wentworth, though equally dutiful and amiable as her sister, had a vivacity that made her see things through a very different medium. Without the smallest portion of acrimony, she had a propensity to rally upon almost every occasion, or, as she expressed it, to cherish the sense of satisfaction, and laugh off the evil that was inevitable. Her person was pleasing and genteel, but the small-pox had made sad ravage in her features; the lovely eye-brow was rooted up, the ornamental eye-lash no more; nor could the dimple be easily distinguished from an unkind indentation; yet were the graces of her mind capable of giving expression to plainness, and an air of sweetness to the rough workings of disease. With this young lady the Vicar was no favourite; she fancied, unable as she was to assign a reason, that there was something more about him than mere honesty and politeness, and had left nothing unsaid to increase

increase her sister Sophia's natural disinclination to an union with him. Miss Wentworth received the news of the Vicar's marriage with a satisfaction she could not conceal; her accent, her glowing cheek, bore too faithful testimony against her; and the Vicar's pride, inconceivably wounded by such apparent contempt, laid the foundation of enmity and revenge in his baleful bosom, which he determined at all hazards to gratify.

Louisa had constrained herself during the Vicar's visit from all tokens of exultation; but the moment he departed, she broke forth according to the dictates of her heart; thanked him a thousand and a thousand times in her Sophia's name for his unexampled generosity; humourously condoled with herself on being deprived of such a brother, and placed his conduct in so ridiculous a point of view, that even his hardened cheek must have experienced a suffusion,  
if



if she had indulged her inclination in his presence. Mrs. Wentworth could not be very angry with the sprightly, well-meaning creature; for though she often wished her less volatile, as she knew it was impossible to render her more innocent, she soon hushed every little dissatisfaction into peace.



## C H A P. VII.

MRS. Arundel's mind was most aptly calculated for her husband's purposes ; in party affairs the intelligence he would not appear to receive was dealt forth at her toilet, and by her communicated at convenient periods ; he was not one of those morose husbands who deny their wives the liberty of speech. Mrs. Arundel would, on every such occasion, not only deliver her own opinion, but sift out the Vicar's sentiments, and make such reports to her friends as were most commendatory of their mutual interest.

But in the midst of all his political engagements, the little Clara was not forgot by him ; he corresponded with her as a kind of father ; entertained and instructed her in the same instant ; and whatever was the subject, such a spirit

of benevolence and generosity ran through his epistles that she thought she could never sufficiently honour and venerate him. Lord Windham would frequently converse with him concerning her, but notwithstanding his lordship had wished his return for the very purpose of consulting him, and resolved not to conceal the minutest sentiment of his heart, the apprehension of his ridicule, and the apprehension of the world's censure, would not permit him to be quite explicit with respect to his intentions.

The Vicar, who had settled it in his own breast, to *ruin*, under the mask of the most exalted friendship, soon formed his plan, and only waited for a happy opportunity of carrying it into execution. But whilst politics and gallantry thus engrossed the minds of the Vicar and his patron, Lord Churchill's thoughts were far otherwise exercised; unable to gain their point where their niece was concerned,

concerned, they at length condescended to oblige him in his own way.—The lovely Sophia was to be invited by Mrs. Arundel on a London journey, and that good-natured lady did not scruple to promise him he should enjoy as many *tete-a-tetes* with her as his heart could wish ; for as she had received her husband's commands, so she had not failed to insinuate herself into Mrs. Wentworth's good graces ; and as for the young ladies, from judging of her heart by their own, they really beheld her with infinite approbation.

But however Mrs. Wentworth might be delighted with the repeated visits she received from Mrs. Arundel (adapted as her behaviour and conversation were to the purpose of captivating her confidence and good-opinion), such visits were always considered by Mrs. Arundel as so many instances of *duty* and submission to the *will* of her husband ; nor did she



fail to exact a price for every such act of compulsion and self-denial. There were some subjects upon which she seemed born to shine, though without the support and assistance of the Vicar she would have made a rather bad figure upon others: one of which was the town and the town's amusements. The young ladies were entertained, notwithstanding they were too equal minded to be elated with her animated descriptions, and were sufficiently apprised of her intention, of giving them, at a future period, an opportunity of judging for themselves—they therefore made a polite return to her application for the pleasure of their company, and, with their mother's perfect concurrence, entered very spiritedly into the little necessary preparations for their journey.

My children, said Mrs. Wentworth in the moment of bidding adieu, Mrs. Arundel's known prudence, and your established principles of reason and propriety,



priety, silence every apprehension I should otherwise experience for the youthful mind on emerging into life—you will be in no danger of erroneous impressions—splendor will never deceive you into the idea, that splendor is the only *good* of human existence—you will always remember, that it is rectitude of manners, and a conscience void of offence, that can alone secure us from the pangs of self-contempt, the intolerable misery of self-condemnation.

As to attachments natural to your time of life, I own I shall hold myself prepared for the natural intelligence; but never, my children, hope to allure me by the parade of titles or dignities; you are enabled by your education to make a valuable figure in an humble sphere—believe me, was it even possible for your little attractions to fix the heart of a man greatly your superior, you

would be far from tasting that felicity moderate circumstances can give.

Sophia and her sister arrived in Pall-Mall. Lord Churchill's impatience to see and converse with the former would not suffer him to defer his visit beyond the ensuing morning. Mrs. Arundel introduced him as her most particular friend, and bespoke that kind of consideration for him, which his apparent merit seemed to intitle him to. Louisa perceived a something of confusion in her sister's behaviour that she could not account for until she discovered that this was one of the young fellow-travellers she had so frequently heard her mention, and sincerely wished that their mutual approbation might not be productive of unhappy consequences. She had heard and read of the prejudices of the polite world, and as her fellow-traveller proved to be a man of fashion, and her sister's fortune and connexions were barely out  
of

of the common cast, together with her mother's admonition, that still vibrated on her ear, she trembled lest a train of difficulties and disappointments should ensue.

Lord Churchill, had he wished to conceal the joy he derived from this long-hoped-for interview, would have found himself very unequal to the task. Dissimulation had ever been in his idea too *unmanly* a practice for him ever to have been guilty of it; and we well know that all first attempts are apt to betray themselves. He treated Miss Louisa with the politeness that was his characteristic, listened unreluctantly to many strokes of her vivacity, but it was still apparent which was with him the principal object of consideration; nor was Miss Wentworth ever more agreeably flattered during her whole existence.

When he took his leave, Louisa declared him to be a man after her own heart, rational, decent, intelligent and entertaining. There can be nothing comparable to him, added she, in the polite circle, to which we are to be introduced—but yet he wants—what say you Sophia—in my opinion he wants animation. I could indeed call such a man brother with delight, but there are still many requisites wanting to constitute the creature I could acknowledge for *my* lord.

Miss Wentworth blushed, and gently chiding her sister, for what she called undue liveliness, endeavoured to change the subject.

Lord Churchill, said Mrs. Arundel, is a nobleman of most singular sentiments—an enemy to all the forms and ceremonies in so much repute with the great world—he has a taste for retirement, doats upon little family parties, and I dare



dare promise you will frequently make one at our social fire-side: but perhaps, ladies, on your introduction to gay scenes, your sentiments may be so changed, as to render him an ineligible companion. Whilst you continue at my house, you must continue perfect mistresses of your own inclinations, nor though it might be my misfortune to have a boor for my relation, or a fanatic for my friend, be taxed with the company or conversation of the one or the other.

Do not alarm yourself, madam, said Miss Louisa, however unsuitable he may prove to my giddy humour, be assured he will at all times be a most acceptable visitant with my sister; to be demure, is with her only another name for being amiable; and besides it must be allowed, that the peculiarities of reason and good-sense will not fail of many admirers.



Miss Wentworth, from the effect her sister's raillery respecting Lord Churchill had on her heart, began to wish she had been spared the rencounter. As to instantaneous attachments, - or what is called *love at sight*, she held it in the highest ridicule, and the soft remembrance she had retained of her admired fellow-traveller's merits, was known by her only by the denomination of justice and discernment. Had she herself indeed been born to the first distinctions, she could not have thought it condescension when forming a friendship with so worthy an object as Lord Churchill appeared; whatever might be his rank in life; but the opinion her humility, and her modesty induced her to entertain of her own deservings, no less induced her to conceive the case quite altered where he had the superiority.

The Vicar would frequently congratulate himself on all his successes, but  
on

on none so much as the success of his  
 finesse where Miss Wentworth was con-  
 cerned : and his busy soul, which could but  
 be ill satisfied with one pursuit, was ever  
 instigating him to great schemes, even  
 to the violation of every law of hospi-  
 tality ; but he beyond measure dreaded  
 the penetration of the lively Louisa, in  
 whose sight he had some reason to appre-  
 hend he was not the most amiable of  
 men.

He had, it was true, long resolved  
 that the little Clara should not escape  
 him, but then he could not at the same  
 time but conceive, that an amour with  
 his fair visitant would have its charms,  
 or, at least, if she should once become  
 a *wife* he might safely recommend him-  
 self, under the double sanction of the  
 husband and the mother's *friend*—for  
 it was one great article of his  
 creed, that women would not hesitate to

B2 VICAR OF BRAY.

err, if every probability of detection was removed to a proper distance.

Miss Wentworth, who, from the instant the Vicar acknowledged himself a married man, conceived her deliverance complete, for she had no notion that gallantry was an universal passion, now conversed with him upon the easiest terms—but whilst her heart was unagitated by fear, it was not a stranger to softer sensations—Lord Churchill engrossed her whole thoughts—his person, his principles, were equally high in her approbation; and she could not help dwelling upon the eligibility of such an union, even in her mother's sight; that mother at whose disposal she ever held herself.

Lord Churchill, too well acquainted with the foibles of his father's character, found himself totally at a loss how to proceed.

proceed.—Miss Wentworth, though so perfectly unexceptionable in his estimation, he could not but be sensible was devoid of all those essentials his father held so sacred—a plebeian of obscure education, and unsupported by even the remoter merit of noble alliances. The Vicar, however, no sooner perceived than he calmed all these kind of emotions in his breast, by convincing him, that though Lord Windham's peace ought to be dear to him, it was unworthy a man of understanding to be tender of his caprices—that a private marriage would answer every desirable purpose, by preserving him the most amiable of her sex, and securing the earl from all dissatisfaction; and he took upon him to engage for the young lady, and the young lady's family, to be satisfied with conscious RIGHT, whilst he took care that insinuated WRONG should satisfy his old patron: in a word, his scheme was to communicate an impression where ne-



cessary, that Lord Churchill had persuaded Miss Wentworth to consent to a fashionable engagement, the only impression that could, in his opinion, temper Lord Windham's pride, restrain his resentment, and ensure the happiness of his son. Lord Churchill thanked him a thousand times for the suggestion, said he would turn it over in his mind, and if it was his *only* resource, endeavour to reconcile himself to it.

Mrs. Arundel, fond of obliging the great world, would fain have introduced the pretty *paysannes* to the first circles, not doubting but their simplicity, however tempered by elegance, and confined notions of life, however in conjunction with reason, would afford no small entertainment, where both the one and the other, from not being understood, were constantly confounded with want of breeding and ignorance: but Miss Louisa was not to be led about without  
a mean-



a meaning so easily as she had imagined. Splendor and parade, instead of striking her with awe, were objects of her ridicule; nor was she to be prevailed upon to take more than a superficial view of what she declaredly despised. The folly of fashion, and the immorality of gaming, were topics on which she abundantly shone, and no less abundantly treated, whilst the wretched Mrs. Arundel hung the head from conscious inferiority and conscious meanness, without daring to vindicate what she did not dare to renounce; for she was an equal slave to the humour of the times, as unfit to assign even the smallest reason, or excuse for their absurdities.

And so, Miss Louisa would often say, this is life it seems; to suffer every sentimental faculty to remain unexerted, and submit to the unrestrained dominion of fancy and caprice. I visited London, not so much for the purpose of gratifying  
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the eye as the ear. Amongst all ranks of people I had flattered myself with still attending to the useful subject, in order that having an opportunity my theory might be corrected by the arguments of experience. It is true, I had no wish to mix with pedants, but must confess I have a kind of instinctive reverence for philosophers.—Your light themes, your whipped syllabubs may do very well for the infant imagination, but to the mind of maturity something more must be added to stamp it with the title of conversation. Except Lord Churchill, and he is rather a companion for my gentle sister than the vivacity and honest inquisitiveness of my heart, I have yet scarcely met with a rational creature; and you must consider, Mrs. Arundel, she would add, we plain girls have larger demands than the fair daughters of the creation; for unless we are allowed to think, and enjoy a reciprocation of sentiment with tolerably intelligent animals, from whence are we to derive our grati-

## VICAR OF BRAY. 67

gratifications? The soothing whisper, the involuntary mark of distinction, are what we are forbid to taste, and though it is sufficient for Miss Sophia to be shewn to be approved, your friend Louisa must have other attention paid her, or she will have visited the metropolis only for mortification.

Mrs. Arundel could with difficulty refrain on some occasions, from telling her sprightly visitor, that it was only for people of rank and fortune to indulge themselves (as it was only people of rank and fortune that could be tolerated) in whimsical refinement; that cards and dress were the felicities of life, and that a pretty idiot was a more valuable, because a more admirable part of the creation, than the most witty or sensible of the human species: nay, indeed, that understanding in a woman, so far from being deemed an accomplishment amongst the polite, it was decryed as the greatest of  
incon-

88 VICAR OF BRAY.

inconveniencies; an impediment to gaiety, a restraint upon conversation, and a formidable infringement on the smartness of the one sex, and the ease of the other: for her part, she would frequently bless herself, that she had merely a common capacity; could discover and promote her own interest, without too nicely attending to the means; that she was not a dupe to her own generosity, or so weak as to be governed by sentiment; that if she found a well illuminated apartment, and ample range of card tables, she had no void of far fetched sensibility to fill up, nor was so foolishly critical as to suffer her happiness to depend upon the religion, education, nay, *pure* fame of her company.

Mr. Windham treated Louisa with great complaisance, but evaded engaging with her upon all occasions. He was no stranger to the strength of her endowments, nor the humanity of her heart; but



but as it is the keenest weapon that cuts the deepest, her questions were not such as he chose to answer, or her observations calculated to either flatter his head or compliment his heart. She was for sincerity and consistency, those most repugnant of all articles to the taste and practice of a courtier, and was for examining the delights of vanity, impropriety and idle gallantry by the standards of principle, of good-sense, delicacy and honour. Mrs. Windham could have been very fond of her, but her husband peremptorily prohibited all intimacy, rather chusing his wife should have the ideas of cards and routs, than learn to sit in judgement upon his conduct, or by her discretion, forbearance, and amiable patience awaken the public to the great errors of his character. He considered an unreflecting, an extravagant wife, as the happiest of foils, and an unsentimental one as the best of all conveniencies. If his lady had been faultless, would she  
not



not have despised the *etiquette* of his family, and the little tyrannies of his temper? but conscious that all could not be justified on her part, she unreluctantly abated much on his, and conceived his toleration of her gaieties as an obligation, when it was merely to answer private purposes of his own that he had hurried her into them.

But, though Miss Louisa was far from seeking or hoping to make a conquest, a gentleman of large fortune and no inconsiderable merit became strangely attached to her.

I have, Mrs. Arundel, he would frequently say in her absence, met with beauty that was irresistible, and wit that was entertaining, but there is a purity of sentiment, and a humanity of disposition in this young lady that is beyond measure estimable. I have several times attempted to insinuate my extreme approbation,

probation, but she has ever rallied me from my purpose, and the other day declared, that there was a formality in love that she had no idea of; that friendship was the darling inhabitant of her bosom, and that whoever honoured her so far as to make her friendly attachment to them of consequence, must pay court to her sensibility without alarming her pride. She did not think it impossible for her to be an object of good-natured attention, but she would never forgive the man that could attempt to persuade her she was an object of admiration.

But, notwithstanding Miss Louisa was so averse to listening to this gentleman's professions, her person was exactly suited to his taste: he had experienced the felicity of being married to a beauty;—your beauties are very agreeable *spectacles*, but, in general, very *despicable* wives; all domesticity was beneath her consideration, and all refinement above her capacity;

capacity ; airy and useless she glided through existence, and left an impression upon her husband's heart, not much to the advantage of the *superlatively* fair. Mrs. Arundel, whose complaisance was unbounded, undertook to promote his interest with the lady ; assured him, from her knowledge of the sex, that perseverance and a good estate were sufficient to subdue the strongest resolution ; and only politely hinted, that if she was but as certain of a handsome present on his success, as certain that he would succeed, she should be apt to congratulate herself, as she did him, by anticipation.

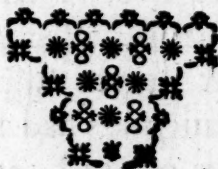
The gentleman did not want for apprehension ; consequently, all conversations upon the subject terminated to the satisfaction of both parties.

Mrs. Arundel was, perhaps, the best convenience upon earth, when properly dealt

dealt by. She had in her time contributed to many happy unions, and effected many desired separations. Widows and widowers, bachelors and maidens, had abundant obligations to her: but if she was frequently mentioned with gratitude, esteem was the last thing that entered the imagination of her favoured friends. She was however too deep a character for the Miss Wentworths reading; for where appearances were satisfactory, they were too innocent to doubt realities, nor did their most anxiously affectionate mother in the smallest degree suspect the unfit situation her daughters had attained. The Vicar's specious conduct, and the regard he professed for her and her family, would not let her suppose it possible for him to have made a bad choice, or that he was capable of violating in the minutest circumstance, the laws of hospitality. It is much to be lamented that goodness of heart should be ever the most open to abuse, and  
your

94 VICAR OF BRAY.

your honest natures instead of engaging protection, only exposing the possessor to a thousand of the most ungenerous offices.



CHAP.



## C H A P. VIII.

**L**ORD Windham, in order to pave the way to his union with his sweet charge, suddenly declared an inclination to retire from the busy scenes of party, and as his nephew was best qualified to succeed him, he recommended the Vicar as a man of experience and abilities, and the Vicar was accordingly received with pleasure into Mr. Windham's train.

On the first unfolding of the earl's intention to retire from public life, Harry Arundel had frequently caught himself balancing in his own mind, whether it was best to pursue his original attachments, or strike an amicable league with the house of Hanover; but when the earl condescended to recommend him in such strong terms to Mr. Windham, he soon renounced all thoughts of changing hands, and reconfirmed himself in  
his

his inveteracy to the established government.

Settled as Mr. Arundel now believed himself to be in one invariable course of hostility with the reigning family, he was continually breaking out into the little joke of, *Where is this Hanover? Where this patrimonial spot of sovereignty?* I have searched every map extant, yet am unable to discover the smallest trace of it; a joke that was received with infinite applause by his new patron, as his principles were not only similar to his uncle's, but supported by him with similar warmth.

In default of male heirs, the title and Windham estate was to devolve to this relation; who to an agreeable person superadded all the accomplishments of a great mind, if greatness and goodness can subsist independently of each other. But if Mr. Windham was not sufficiently  
narrow

narrow or ambitious in his sentiments, as to envy his cousin's prior claim to the family honours or fortune, he beyond measure envied him the opportunities he found he enjoyed by Mrs. Arundel's means of promoting the interest of his heart; for however avarice or volatility had in the first instance prevailed over a hopeless passion, his heart too abundantly subscribed to Sophia's merits for him to be satisfied with his conduct. This was, however, too tender a point to be entered upon by the Vicar, though his penetration was not to be eluded; and he flattered himself, that he should find a fit instrument in the person of his patron, of that revenge he had vowed against Miss Wentworth for her mortifying insensibility to all his perfections.

Public dissatisfactions, arising from a long continued and an unsuccessful war, obliged government to change, if not its measures, at least its ministry to appease

them. Mr. Windham was now called into a considerable employment; and as he was already the representative of a county, and uncommonly eminent for his wisdom and eloquence, great expectations were formed of the consequences. Mr. Windham, by an extraordinary piece of finesse, having converted his disaffection to the house of Brunswick into an appearance of patriotism, found himself so opposed by the court interest in all his schemes, and so little the favourite of his prince, that no advantage could be derived either to himself or the expecting Vicar from his concern in the administration.

The Vicar, who was deep read in the mystery of politics, was not however without hope of seeing the tide turn entirely in his favour; but, as every event must be assisted by ways and means, he persuaded his patron when he had been only a short time in office to resign, on  
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an opponent's being advanced to a superior post to the one he occupied.

Mr. Windham did not hesitate to comply with this advice ; and as the shadow of an injury wounds frequently as deep as the substance, this resignation, with the cause, produced the desired effect in the minds of the people ; at the same time that it gave the Vicar an opportunity of discussing, canvassing, and largely censuring ministerial transactions wherever he came. It was now that continental alliances were first suggested ; the critical situation of the Hanoverian territories inciting those at the helm to recommend themselves to their royal master, by approving their attention to whatever was dear to him.

The Vicar, who was fond of scriptural quotations, from conceiving them capable of sanctifying mischievous purposes, would frequently exclaim, Woe be to that land

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whose



whose king is a *foreigner* ; when every step shall have been taken to defend a spot that never was, nor ever can be of the smallest utility to England, should it still continue in a state of danger, England itself will be sold for its preservation. The treaty with Prussia, the really extraordinary, though, as the ministry had managed it, inevitable step, of introducing foreign troops to protect a kingdom which had for so many generations been both honoured and revered for the courage and resolution of its inhabitants, furnished these malecontents with additional and incontestible matter for complaint. The Vicar was indefatigable ; all the powers of his eloquence were brought into play, and a general umbrage was the consequence. The conduct of the present day, and the noble stands made by our brave ancestors, was a no less mortifying than alarming antithesis : would they have submitted to be protected by the importation of foreigners ?

foreigners? would they have depended upon hirelings for their defence, and tamely beheld their land overspread by an unknown race? but it was *Hanover* they had to thank for their danger, their indignities, their distresses; the country had been drained of its natural strength for Hanoverian purposes; and those little territories, which, in comparison with the British dominions, might be contained in the hollow of the hand, were of tenfold the importance in sovereign estimation to all his other possessions.

But however unconcerned Mr. Windham might be in the scheme of calling in the Hessian and Hanoverian troops, on a strong presumption of an invasion from the French, there were not people wanting to affirm that he had a principal concern in the treaty, which was now worked off as an instrument of disgust; nor did very many scruple to pronounce the German war on future occasions to

be *his* war.—It is true, he was not publicly known to be in the administration at that period; but need we be told that advice and consent, give the man what title you please, is the criterion? but be that as it may, the following little anecdote must not be concealed.

During the grand cabals and ministerial tyranny of removing all from power that were so hardy as to exclaim against the court measures, the honest Vicar, in conjunction with the discerning spirit of his wife, (who had received a friendly hint to that purpose) was convinced that himself and patron were on the popular, but not the profitable side of the question. On a closer and more prudential examination into circumstances and contingencies, he did not scruple to confess to this partner of his soul, that they had mistaken the opposition; for that when they conceived themselves only opposing the ministry, they were opposing  
a love-

a sovereign, who knew not to shrink from his resolutions; and consequently the question was, merely whether they should persist in an useless self-denial, or condescend to temporize in one single article? a question that was not long in determining; and notwithstanding the face of things remained unchanged, and that the displaced gentlemen found their wonted asylum with Mr. Windham; the Vicar had by due recourse to his arts of persuasion, of which he was so distinguished a master, brought his patron first to deliberate, next to waver, and in the end to resolve to follow his instructions on any application to engage once more in the service of his country.



## C H A P. IX.

**T**HE Vicar, notwithstanding all his public engagements, was in no degree neglectful of his private ones.—Lord Windham had purchased a seat in another country for the reception of his fair mistress, and turned all his thoughts to the fitting up the apartments with magnificence, and laying out the garden with elegance.

The Vicar, as ambassador and plenipo, had several interviews with Miss Clara, but instead of employing them in the service of his patron, he was only attentive to the advancement of his own interest. In the course of their conversations, he threw out many little things respecting the earl to alarm, and then again, with amazing dexterity, would pay a compliment to his lordship's heart sufficient to silence every apprehension ;  
but



but still the grand point was to keep her opinion of himself in an exalted state, and prepare her, on an exigence, to fly to him for protection. He saw the purity of her soul too plainly to hope to succeed by any other means, therefore thought it would be best in the moment that she was to be snatched from him for ever (as his marriage was unknown to her) to offer to rescue her from violation, by becoming her husband, and leave the rest to fate. At some periods, indeed, he debated whether it would not be safest to let my lord accomplish his scheme, and share the valuable prize according to common forms ; for it was a maxim with him, and perhaps ninety-nine times in a hundred a certain one in cases of the same nature, that the mistress of my lord would unreluctantly be the mistress of my lord's chaplain ; but it was too much to behold her given up to another, though for ever so short a period, and he reverted to his resolution of com-

pleting her destruction by a less violent, though not less cruel method.

As these abundant concerns would not permit him to be much at home, and Mrs. Arundel had her private visitants, Lord Churchill and Sophia had many interviews. His abundant accomplishments were strong advocates for him in the gentle Miss Wentworth's bosom, nor did she attempt to conceal from her sister that her approbation of him exceeded all she had ever before felt. Louisa, from the affection she bore her Sophia, was sorry they had ever emerged from their peaceful retirement; for though the stage-coach adventure had made a slight impression on Sophia's heart, her happiness was not endangered, and the remembrance of her agreeable fellow-traveller might, perhaps, have kindly operated as an antidote against the soft folly of a second *tendre*; but to have that spark fanned by the formidable breath

breath of that first approved object, to behold, to converse with him daily, only for the misery of giving him up at the command of a stern father for ever, was what she could not reflect upon either with patience or resignation.

She once had a notion of making her mother acquainted with the predicament her sister was under, together with all its probable, its formidable contingencies, but then she considered that it would be as cruel a stroke of kindness, as ever had been preached, for that it was not to prevent what had actually happened, but perhaps to render that a calamity, which might, if left to itself, work out a very different termination. She therefore, confining both her hopes and her fears to her own bosom, resolved to wait the event with all imaginable composure : nor was her conduct upon the occasion, either incompatible with prudence, or good-sense.

108 VICAR OF BRAY.

Mrs. Wentworth would have been rendered unhappy, without the power or possibility of being serviceable; and the self-constraint of her sister's heart, beyond expression, aggravated: for as she could perceive that she avoided all mention of Lord Churchill's name, except when she *found* him the subject of their private as well as public conversation, she could not flatter herself that she would relieve herself by the communication of whatever pain a separation might cost her, when she could alone communicate it to the proved enemy of her peace. Besides she had a kind of superstitious confidence in the operations of Providence, nor could be persuaded, that whatever changes or chances an individual experienced, when free from self-reproach, were other than the divine will, and consequently all calculated to answer a salutary purpose; therefore as the first interview of this *pair of lovers*, had been accidental, and the  
renewal

VICAR OF BRAY. 109

renewal of their *personal* approbation, an equal accident, as she imagined, on both sides, she could not help trusting that all would turn out for the best.



CHAP.



## C H A P. X.

GENERAL Blakeney had the honour to be by some means a distant relation of Mrs. Arundel's, and Mrs. Arundel was a lady peculiarly tenacious of her family consequence. No wonder, therefore, that the poor old gentleman's treatment, together with the fate of Minorca, should become objects of their mutual attention.

The bravery of the governor, the hardships, the fatigues of a long and resolute siege, were to the last degree enhanced in the recital, and the miserable fatality by which both the one and the other were rendered abortive, spread out in its utmost aggravation. Though reduced to the greatest extremities, yet relying upon the promises of administration, had not the general nobly disdained capitulating, until the ships which contained all his hopes.

## VICAR OF BRAY. III

hopes of succour were seen, instead of making, to sail beyond the port? Here was a something of a basis, nor did the industrious Vicar fail to raise an alarming structure; the fleet under the command of Mr. Byng had not been unobserved by him in all its slow preparations, and to the everlasting fame of his prophetic genius, effected just as much when embarked as he had foretold.—The French squadron was permitted to pass unattacked, at a time when an engagement would have been decisive, and the garrison at Minorca not only unrelieved, but compelled, by the mutiny of the soldiers from their disappointments, to a disadvantageous surrender.

Not a coffee-house in London was unvisited by Mr. Arundel on the occasion; the flame of discontent raised to its utmost height, and the clamour against the administration such as it was impossible to resist; such an officer abandoned—

## 112 VICAR OF BRAY.

doned—such a loss as Minorca incurred was sufficiently irritating for the populace;—and whilst they listened to the story of the general's short provisions, his fortitude, his faith and his bravery, they resolved to drag effigies of Mr. Byng through the streets, and commit every act of phrenzy and outrage the abused *freedom* of the English constitution could alone suggest to the most frantic of mankind. Mr. Windham's popularity, as was the plan, increased with each succeeding day; the people looked up to him as their only preserver; and so far did the exigencies of affairs prevail, that however repugnant to the inclination of the court party, he was a second time invited to accept an appointment, that was to the last degree flattering to the Vicar's expectations.

This point gained, it was necessary that public opinion should have some foundation; the Vicar, in an important

*tete-*

## VICAR OF BRAY. 113

*tete-a-tete*, convinced his patron that nothing would be more grateful to the minds of the people, under their present circumstances, (the foreign troops were sent back a few days before his entering on his office) nor produce a greater opposition than an attempt to establish a national militia.

The utility, the advantage, the necessity for such an institution, were now universally circulated by the Vicar and his train, and was received with the expected avidity. It was a service of honour, of trust ; it was, in a word, to bring matters as it were to an equality they could never otherwise attain ; it was lessening the value of standing armies, which had always been an object of disgust ; it was to flatter, if not actually to promote the convenience and benefit of the individual. The activity, the assiduity, the parade of the new minister, communicated that hope to the breasts of  
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## 114 VICAR OF BRAY.

the people to which they had long been a stranger; for as there was business in agitation, they never suspected, much less perceived, that the patriot was lost. The topics of conversation were nevertheless so far changed at Mr. Windham's, that even Hanover, that *unimportant spot*, which no map whatever contained, was now distinguished by the Vicar himself, by the epithet of his *majesty's most respectable dominions*. The war, instead of being calculated for the ruin of England, was declared to be carrying on on the justest of principles; it was not in order to extend, but preserve our possessions; his majesty was the common father of his subjects; and he begged to know whether in an hour of exigence we would not be glad to receive services from *Hanover*, though we were unwilling that *Hanover* should be served at our expence.

CHAP.



## C H A P. XI.

**M**R. Windham, when he consented to accept his uncle's choice, had confined all his attention to the fortune he was to receive upon the occasion. The woman, according to the modern custom amongst men of fashion and breeding, was a mere dead weight in the account, and he was pretty permanent in his ideas. The whole business, therefore, of his life (abstracted from his political business) was dissipation; but though he was indefatigable in his pursuits, from mistaking the means, disappointment was frequently his portion. He had not been taught that *joy* was the most capricious of all our attainments; that to reach the heart, it must be self-derived, and that the form of laying traps did but effectually banish the *shade* that bid defiance to every species of constraint. Of all the misfortunes of existence, none is more severely felt

felt than this *rage* for amusement ; not the labour of a Sisyphus had ever less meaning, nor could be productive of less utility : this was, however, the misfortune Mr. Windham justly incurred as a punishment for counter-acting the good and rational principles with which nature had endued him ; for it was not because he was unsusceptible of domestic satisfactions, that he had united himself to the woman he had little or no acquaintance with, and not the smallest disposition to approve, but because he chose to sacrifice every finer feelings to the suggestions of avarice.

But notwithstanding Mr. Windham had objections to his wife's making an acquaintance with the Miss Wentworths for many reasons, Miss Needham was introduced by him to her, as the woman he wished should share her heart, and Mrs. Windham found great entertainment in the gaiety of that young lady's disposition ;

disposition : nor did that young lady fail to find almost equal pleasure at being so unexpectedly connected with Mr. Windham's family ; more especially at a period when her aunt was taken up with visitors, that she was wholly disinclined to form any acquaintance with : nor was this by any means an unnatural circumstance ; for the beauty of the one sister, and the wit of the other most mortifyingly exempted the rest of the female world from attention, wherever they appeared ; and as she conceived that nothing but such a rival could have proved an impediment to the advancement of her fortune, in her designs upon Lord Churchill, she did not chuse to expose herself even to the hazard of a second *injury*. From these several particulars, Mrs. Windham's house became highly eligible to her ; for it was, in the first place, a house of polite resort, and in the second, whatever superior charms Mrs. Windham might have possessed,

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her being a married woman gave Miss Needham every desired advantage.

But however Miss Needham's purposes were answered upon the occasion, Mrs. Windham had little reason to congratulate herself on forming an acquaintance with her ; for as the gaiety of her heart was unrestrainable, so her artifice was unfathomable. Whatever folly or extravagance she wished to indulge herself in, she most dextrously contrived to throw the blame upon her too indulgent friend ; nor when Mr. Windham discovered any thing contrary to his approbation in his wife's conduct, could he, with all his penetration, trace it beyond her *immediate* want of discretion. It sometimes indeed happened that Mrs. Windham was not quite satisfied with the scrapes she found herself drawn into, and her heart even went so far as to suggest to her, that she was duped by her pretended friend ; but as her husband was in better humour  
from



from the circumstance of having a lively visitor, and her *sphere* of *activity* in no inconsiderable degree enlarged from that circumstance, she thought it was better to overlook an imaginary imposition, than by complaining forfeit a real good.

Miss Needham was so jesuitical in all her proceedings, that she might almost bid defiance to detection; nay her eagle-eyed uncle was unable, at all periods, to elude her wiles; therefore it must be far from extraordinary, that common minds were a prey to her. But so successful as she generally proved, it was a great check to her pride, and allay to her exultation, that Lord Churchill was beyond her utmost *reachings*: yet it was not by superabundant caution, or superabundant suspicion, that he secured himself; it was by following the dictates of his *taste*, and firmly avoiding all but general acquaintance with a woman utterly repugnant  
to



to that *taste*, and repugnant, in many respects, to his most remote approbation.

Mrs. Arundel, not having a large stock of reputation herself, would frequently descend to put in her claim to *reflected* honours, from the idea she entertained of her niece's reputation for every species of elegance with the *beau monde*—in this manner my niece Needham dresses—at such and such routs, my niece Needham is courted to appear—and few people that ever behold her, take her for any other than a person of the first rank.—How true it is that we cannot make a Mercury of every log!—had Mrs. Arundel but had the grace to have been silent, her rich cloaths, and rich connexions, could not have failed to give her dignity—she would, nevertheless, betray the dunghill from which the gilded mushroom had so recently sprung, by betraying the poverty of soul that was her birth-right

right, and the infallible characteristic of meanness and low-breeding.

Lord Churchill, whose heart was all benevolence, as he could not but perceive, wished it had been possible to correct, the errors of her appearance; nay, he even proceeded so far, as to gently railly her upon her conformity to every new *whim*, and observed, that her good-sense was rather impeached by such apparent pliability: but Miss Needham was one of those people, that, according to Mr. Stern's account of the French, always pick out a flattering meaning from an ambiguous address, and whatever satire, or instruction, it was intended to convey, placed it to an account, that wholly defeated the desired effect. Besides on such occasions his lordship seldom failed to insinuate, that to dress like Miss Sophia Wentworth, was to be the standard of elegance, and the mark of incomparable understanding. Few with her

person, he would say, would hesitate a moment, to give into the utmost extravagances of fashion, from conceiving that its utmost extravagance would be sanctified by such abundant loveliness: yet neatness and simplicity were her governing principles in that particular, nor were her manners less tainted by affectation than her figure peculiarised by the trappings of folly.

This, and this alone, was the gall and bitterness she could not avoid tasting; for it was death to her to be convinced that any female had the superiority in the opinion of a man she had thought it worth her while to form designs upon, and much more to find the acknowledged idea of superiority to consist in such things as she would have wished to have turned into ridicule. When they did happen to be all of a party, Miss Needham's volubility, by raising a laugh, seemed to give her the advantage, where the powers of  
entertainment,

entertainment, and an acquaintance with the great world, were the question; but she had the mortification to find, that that laugh once terminated, the sweetness, and what she called insipidity of the pretty rustic, was sufficient to bring back the gayest to their original assiduity and admiration. What abominable perverseness! she would exclaim, when seated at her toilet—these girls have not a single charm to boast, beyond what I am possessed of, except *shyness* can come under that denomination—they neither throw out lures for the homage they meet with, nor betray the faintest gleam of gratitude on receiving it; nay more, I heard that eldest *thing* intreat to quit Ranelagh, only because she was made of too much importance by fellows the most desirable of all others in a fine woman's train.—I cannot suspect her of so much ingenuity as to be artful; or, from its being evident that the more she flies, she is so much the more pursued, I should

think that the effect of management that I must otherwise consider as the work of downright opposition, the offspring of genuine contradiction. Had I been permitted to reach this fair one's ear, I would most assuredly have whispered some very salutary truths. It is the nature, the characteristic of humanity, to act repugnant to the wishes of the vain. That insolence of aspect, which bespeaks, which demands, superior attention, instead of being even *duely* honoured, never fails to excite disgust, whilst the perhaps less beautiful features of modesty and timidity are universally attractive. Vanity, under proper restrictions, (however strange the assertion) is one of the first, because one of the most active virtues. Everlasting approbation and undying praise, are what it pants after, are what it aspires to.—The vainest of individuals ought then to endeavour to be the most amiable of individuals—the graces of benevolence and the emanations of refinement



ment are irresistibly captivating, nor would it require half the labour to build our claims upon a firm foundation, that it costs us only to weave the web of contempt, and incur all the chagrin that attends keen disappointments—but this I confess is to forfeit my own character; reflections, such as these, may fall with propriety from the pen of the moralist, the historian ought to employ his pen very differently.

Miss Needham, however, mistook the method for captivating; to display a love of expence, and an eager pursuit of amusements, was rather to make herself formidable than amiable: for however the gentlemen may admire the extravagance or thoughtlessness of a casual companion, there are few in their senses that would willingly unite themselves to such known evils. In the course of her connexions she had many lovers, but they all of them retreated

rather precipitately: attracted by the elegance of her appearance, they were repelled by the knowledge of her slender finances; and she was most reluctantly convinced, that it was much harder to secure, than make a conquest.

But as people once stroled from the track of propriety are much more liable to flounder than recover themselves, so pride and self-opinion would not let her correct what she too plainly saw was an error; whilst the increased height of her head-dress, and abundant extension of petticoat, proclaimed her follies unre-nounced, they only served as beacons to the otherwise susceptible heart at which they were levelled.

A regard for the fair daughters of the creation will lead me from my subject in spite of all my resolutions; why will they so industriously labour to substitute deformity for graces, and wantonly oppose

pose the kind intentions of nature ? Lovely features appear to the best advantage when least adorned, and ordinary ones only derive additional defects from gaudy trappings, not to mention the reproach the understanding must sustain ; elegance and good sense are the striking and irresistible charms, and where elegance and good sense are wanting, the deficiency cannot be supplied by the utmost torturings of art ; but if the frippery of externals is so contemptible, what must we say to borrowed complexions, and the manifold *chicanery* practiced by the ladies to obtain admiration ? shall we suppose the mind to be worthy when the cheek glows with *deceit* ? or imagine, that she who could go such lengths for the gratifications of her vanity, would shudder at any thing that was properly calculated to fan that pernicious flame, though vice and infamy trod close upon their heels ?

## C H A P. XII.

**A**LL this time the Miss Wentworths were peculiarly happy in Lord Churchill's acquaintance, from his disinclination for politics; for as politics were in no degree adapted to their cast of sentiment, and Mrs. Arundel's visitors, not less than her husband's, were all fond of public subjects and popular disquisitions; it was a relief, it was an entertainment to them, to chat with a creature formed upon their own plan, unbustling, yet benevolent, gentle, yet self-minded, and well-bred, yet with the learning of a Tully, the wisdom of a Socrates.

Miss Sophia and my lord had contrived so well to understand one another, that he had solicited permission, and she more than half consented, to his waiting upon Mrs. Wentworth.

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This part of his lordship's wishes, however, no sooner reached Mr. Arundel's knowledge than he undertook to plead his cause with the good Mrs. Wentworth himself; for he recollected, it would be necessary his eloquence should be exerted to settle the etiquette of allowing her child to marry a man, whom she had been assured, at a former period, was capable no less than his lively cousin of entertaining dishonourable designs upon her. Notwithstanding Mr. Arundel had no extraordinary nicety himself, he was sensible what were the operations of the nicest mind; and therefore knew it impossible for Mrs. Wentworth to admit of any excuse for the base intention he had imputed to Lord Churchill; he nevertheless hit upon a short and certain course; the earl's name was a second time made free with; the intimation he had given her respecting the danger of the young gentleman's visits to Miss Wentworth was only a device of that



nobleman's to have him denied access to her; the circumstance told too well not to impose upon Mrs. Wentworth's credulity; and as Lord Churchill was now represented to her, as possessing every desirable accomplishment, she could not suppress some little flutterings of vanity, on adding his title to the catalogue.

Miss Louisa asked her sister what steps were to be taken on the other side the question; or whether paternal authority was not as sacred as maternal: for my part, added she livelily, I could not, in the moment that my heart felt how essential the coincidence of the latter to my happiness, subscribe to the *piety* of violating the former. Indeed Miss Sophia, notwithstanding her mother's sanction, had great objections to yielding to her lover's solicitations of marrying him secretly; but such was Lord Windham's disposition, that there was not the smallest

smallest hopes of prevailing over his prejudices ; and she, at length, though very reluctantly, submitted to the wisdom of her friends, who appointed an early day in the succeeding week to confirm her Lady Churchill. The Vicar did not chuse to appear in the affair for numberless reasons, nor was his wife permitted on the same principle to attend her young friend : but Mrs. Wentworth had an old acquaintance only a few miles from London, whose son performed the office of father, and at whose house the company of that day were entertained ; which consisted of Colonel Westly, a cornet in the same corps, just turned of seventeen, Miss Louisa Wentworth, and the bride and bridegroom. Mr. Leneston was a youth of most pleasing manners, and a happy person ; Lord Churchill introduced him to his lady as his first favourite, assuring her, that nothing but an unfortunate misunderstanding between

that gentleman and the Vicar, should have prevented his bespeaking her friendship for him at a much earlier period.

Lady Churchill was sufficiently inclined to judge highly of Mr. Leneston's merits, from the peculiar regard with which her lord treated him; but she confessed, that there was something exceedingly prepossessing in his appearance, exclusive of every partial consideration, and that she was glad in the first injunction she ever received, that her inclination and her duty were so perfectly correspondent.

Louisa raillied with her usual good humour and innocence, and from a desire to evince how much she wished to oblige her newly created brother, was attentive, beyond her common custom, to the convenience and entertainment of the youth he loved.

Lord

Lord Windham was not long unapprized of his son's connexion with Miss Wentworth ; but as the Vicar, according to his preconcerted plan, represented it merely of such a nature as to be dissoluble at will, he very *morally* sat down perfectly satisfied ; and in order to give the better colour to this deception, that worthy priest prevailed upon Lord Churchill, though without acquainting him with his motive, to retire for some months to Mrs. Wentworth's rural habitation, promising to stand between him and his father's displeasure, if after such precautions his disobedience should transpire.

It has already been hinted, that Mr. Windham's domestic affairs were by no means under the happiest regulation. His lady was a *fine* lady ; dress and play according to *his* account of her dividing her heart. But dress and play were rather the methods of dissipation she had fixed upon, on finding how utterly unsuitable

suitable her disposition to the disposition of that man to whom she was united, than objects of her choice. She was naturally generous and humane, disposed to serve all mankind, or relieve their distresses ; but was more particularly attentive to the tie of consanguinity. Now it was a rule with Mr. Windham on all occasions, to prefer a stranger to his nearest relations ; was a place unoccupied, an employment of consequence within his gift, it was not a relation that was ever benefited : favours were loudest proclaimed by the unexpected and unsoliciting ; and the tale of gratitude much better told by a distant party ; consequently, it was the ostentatious, rather than the seemingly self-interested track he loved to pursue.

Mrs. Windham had, on her first marrying, pointed out many persons to him, whom she hoped would have shared his munificence ; but after fruitless endeavours



deavours and repeated disappointments, she at length left him uninterruptedly to his own inventions.

But however Mrs. Windham might have the complaisance or resolution never to interfere in her husband's concerns, he was very far from returning the compliment ; it was no uncommon practice with him to break in purposely upon her most favourite parties ; quarrel with her best approved friends, and, as a *coup de grace* in the art of contradiction, he constituted Mrs. Arundel the reigning mistress of his family, and compelled his lady to regulate her principal steps, as she pronounced most prudent, elegant or advantageous.

But this had nothing to do with his popular character, consequently did not in the smallest degree diminish the lustre of his fame ; for your great men have an exemption from all private, in

136 VICAR OF BRAY.

return for their public virtues, nor is there one in a thousand that fails to exercise so *extraordinary* a privilege.

Lord and Lady Churchill were attended in their country expedition by Miss Louisa and the agreeable Lenefton, with the merits of whose character and disposition Miss Louisa felt herself unspeakably charmed. But extravagant as the idea might seem in a girl of eighteen, she had been frequently heard to declare that she never would change her condition; her person she insisted upon it, though tolerable in an acquaintance, would be intolerable in a wife, and she moreover confessed her mind too independently constructed to acknowledge a sovereign when it sought only a friend.

These declarations, together with her growing and visible approbation of the young cornet, exposed her to much raillery from her sister and her lord; she  
returned

returned the ball with equal kindness and good humour ; assured them that Leneston should be the friend, though not the master of her heart, and that she would prove for the honour of the sex, that friendship and love, where the distinction was necessary, were not one and the same thing.

But however our conduct may be within our own power, where there are no claims nor no disgusts upon a youthful heart, to be exposed to frequent interviews with an agreeable object, is insensibly to rob it of a dangerous share of approbation. In the country, people's pleasures, from being more limited, are much more apt to center in their company, than in town. Lord and Lady Churchill had their domestic occupations to fill up many of their hours ; and as to Mrs. Wentworth, she seldom wanted employment. Leneston and Louisa were consequently all the world to each other, for by much  
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the larger portion of the twenty four hours—and from a similarity of taste, of sentiment and disposition, improved their mutual, their accidental importance to the utmost in their power. If Miss Wentworth read, it was to communicate her comments on her author at their next meeting; or if Mr. Leneston strolled to any little distance from the lodge alone, it was for the purpose of discovering some new prospect, to which he might conduct his fair friend on their next excursion—thus, though separate they were ever united, and without being aware of it, at least on the lady's part, were laying the foundation for a no less soft than permanent attachment.

I own, I am obliged to do violence to my inclination whenever Miss Louisa Wentworth is the subject—because I cannot help wishing it was possible to clear up the many errors, to which the otherwise most lovely part of the creation are exposed, by holding them forth so ami-

amiable an example. It is by no means necessary that to be prudent we should be gloomy, or to be lively, that we should lose sight of discretion. Miss Louisa's wit was *pointed* by good nature, and her gaiety tempered by decorum; she considered both sexes with equal benevolence, and as she was incapable of aiming at superiority over the one, so she was incapable of laying traps for the admiration of the other.—I shall, perhaps be told that with such a person as I have described, it was wise in her not to prepare disappointments for herself; but I must be allowed to observe, that her mind had as much the advantage of the generality of female minds, as the most perfect form had the advantage of whatever personalities she could boast.—She nevertheless bore her faculties so meekly, that it was only by intimacy that her best graces were discovered; instead of which, we find many ladies making infinite parade of what at last proves only to be a superficial knowledge of things,  
and



and a superficial understanding; nor is it uncommon for your imaginary *wits*, to be full, if not more superlatively *vain*, than the greatest beauty in the universe.

They had not, however, enjoyed his company above three weeks before a summons from Colonel Westly called him to London, to prepare for a speedy embarkation to the West-Indies. Miss Louisa with difficulty suppressed the starting tear—yet tenderness and affection are the tests of friendship;—she in vain laboured to render her last adieu articulate, nor could resume her vivacity for many hours after his departure;—but when the soul is agitated, the accent cannot be composed;—when the soul is softened by a thousand ideas of danger and distress to an esteemed object, why should the natural operations be marvellous? or, if to feel for a brother would be no reproach to the purest mind, why these critical distinctions?

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—is not a valuable friend as precious as the nearest relation?—These were the reflexions, these the arguments, Louisa Wentworth had recourse to in order to recover her own good opinion; but as her brother and sister were more than ever attentive to her amusement, and spared her when furnished with such incontestable weapons, she could not conquer a delicate consciousness of some small deviation from her character.

What, however, was the pang the lively Miss Louisa experienced, to that which Mrs. Westly's worthy bosom was destined to sustain! A husband, with whom she had spent many years of happiness, the happiness of reason and of virtue, had been suddenly taken from her; and now the cruel, but inevitable necessity for giving up her only child, the support, the comfort of her declining days, to all the hazardous consequences of war, was a task that in the decline of  
life

life she was bound to accomplish : he had been engaged in the army before his father's death, and would have sacrificed himself a thousand ways rather than have incurred the slightest shadow of dishonour; —what was then to be done?—Mrs. Westly having strained him in her maternal arms, and invoked the heavens to shed their happiest influence, retired with precipitance to her closet, from whence she never returned until she heard her child had performed his duty. Mrs. Westly and Mrs. Wentworth had been acquainted at an early period, consequently their children's attachment had been early formed ; and it would have been considered by the mothers as a pleasing event, if more than the attachment of friendship had been the result. Louisa was indeed intirely out of the question, from her extreme youth ; but though Sophia confessed the young soldier's abundant merit, though she was the first to applaud his conduct, and the  
first

first to tremble for his danger, her heart would never feel those kind of sentiments for him which she conceived necessary to precede an everlasting union ; besides, the profession he was engaged in, and which was the profession of his genius and election, was with her a very strong objection. With respect to Mr. Westly, whilst he subscribed to all the merits of his fair friend, his tendres were devoted to a lady, whose charms, however inferior to Sophia's, pleased his fancy and attracted his approbation in a different degree, to all he felt for her. This little disappointment of the maternal wish was only compensated by the unexceptionableness of the man to whom Miss Wentworth was united, and of the woman the blooming general hoped to call his own.

Having torn himself therefore from the house of his mother, accompanied by Mr. Leneston, he flew to this beloved lady,

lady, with whom he was on the very eve of marriage, when the commands of his sovereign and the distresses of his country required him to embark upon a dangerous expedition.

The sensibility of the lover was heightened by the sensibility of the hero; none but the brave, according to his creed, meriting the fair.—I go, my dear madam, said he, either to render myself more worthy of the distinction with which you have honoured me; or to sanctify that distinction by falling in a noble cause.—Heaven will perhaps be propitious!—but whatever disposition Heaven is pleased to make of the man who aspired to your hand, it must not be obtained by a breach of his duty.

Poor Leneston was exceedingly affected at the interview, and gave one almost involuntary sigh to the recollection of the amiable Miss Wentworth. Mrs. Westly retired



VICAR OF BRAY. 145

retired, but the tender-hearted Louisa begged leave to accompany her, in order to soften the measure of her afflictions; of which offer she most gladly accepted, for Louisa was her god-daughter and very great favourite.



## C H A P. XIII.

**T**HE scheme of the national militia had so much of the guise of true patriotism, that though many might wish, few ventured to oppose it. It was a salutary, it was a spirited measure, and produced all those happy consequences the Vicar had intended it should be productive of—the fixing his patron in the affections of the people. The troops that had given such disgust to the English, were removed, indeed, from their fight, but retained in their pay: a little army of observation were formed by them in Westphalia, and his royal highness the duke of Cumberland was appointed their commander—supplies were solicited and obtained by his majesty for their support; but, notwithstanding Mr. Windham did not hesitate to deliver his majesty's message respecting this grant to the house, and appeared highly pleased with

with its success, some certain circumstances transpired, that proved his heart was not well affected towards it; in consequence of which, he received an intimation to resign, to the utter chagrin of the Vicar.

Mr. Windham sustained this disgrace with the dignity of conscious virtue; was never once heard to complain against, or, in the smallest degree, reflect upon the authors of it. But however exemplary his moderation, the Vicar's vehemence hurried him into the opposite extreme;—he recapitulated, wherever he came, the wonders of Mr. Windham's administration; what great things he had done, and what greater still had been prepared by him for accomplishment, had not his enemies prevailed against him, and the ear of his sovereign been so unhappily tainted.

In this short recess from employment, the Vicar proposed to his patron to make a visit to Lord Churchill, in which proposal that gentleman most willingly acquiesced ; and, accompanied by Mrs. Arundel, they arrived safely at Wentworth lodge, as Lord Churchill had named his mother-in-law's small, but elegant habitation.

Lord Churchill was not of that number, whose behaviour is regulated by the smiles or frowns of court favour. Convinced his cousin had been ill treated, because he told him he had, he made it his whole study to soften his private dissatisfactions, by his kindest approbation.

As that serenity of sky which succeeds a thunder storm is most pleasingly enjoyed by most individuals, so the fatigues and bustles of a court life gave Lord Churchill's retreat additional beauties to  
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the mind of its visitants. The fields appeared more lovely, the streams more refreshing, the general simplicity more amiable, and the gentle goddess of the scene, the sweet Sophia, more divine, from the amazing contrast to all they had been accustomed to behold. Sophia, unconscious of the advantages, the enchanting light in which she was considered, with each returning day displayed some new powers for entertaining;—little concerts were formed by her, like the first mother of mankind; with chearful innocence she led the rustic ball; but, however amiable her conduct, neither Mr. Windham, nor the Vicar, were perfectly satisfied with it.

Mr. Windham's person was allowed to be a very fine one, by the whole polite circle; Mr. Arundel's understanding of an uncommon magnitude; and they conceived themselves intitled to very different distinctions to those the lady was



disposed to pay them :—her husband was the first and last object of her sollicitude and satisfaction, and she was weak enough to be flattered by the reputation of an excellent wife, which she possessed all over the country.

The Vicar was more than ever offended, by her ladyship's confirmed insensibility. A girl might be incapable of discovering his mental perfections; a girl might be disgusted by the gravity of the ecclesiastical character, but the girlish period was past; yet did he find himself only honoured and respected, where he cruelly and unwarrantably sought to obtain some more tender consideration, and he entered into fresh vows of dire vengeance.

Sometimes he thought it would be no bad scheme to betray the miserable Louisa, as he very obligingly called her; but that was soon rejected, as wholly incompatible

patible with her character; and as he was unable to fix upon any thing with the smallest probability, he resolved to leave it to opportunity, not only to furnish him with means, but to give those means the colour he most wished them to wear. According to his creed, opportunity was the grand essential; and he was so hardy, as one day to ask a person he was conversing with, as the test of his arguments, whether, under proper management, avarice could not receive the complexion of prudence, deceit of caution, self-interest of public spiritedness, and revenge of justice.

Lord Churchill, whose love of the English constitution, and zeal for the established religion, occasioned him to be attached, as I have already observed, to the prince then upon the throne, was exceedingly pleased to find his visitors sentiments correspondent; for when in town, he had too little attended to politics to know

which party they belonged to:—his own sincerity secured him from all suspicion, and the change in their sentiments was considered by him as merely the effects of conviction and ingenuousness.

Was the house of commons, he would say, but better furnished with the disinterested, the rational, the distinguishing and the just, what a happy, what a prosperous nation would the English be rendered?—No country, he would add, possessed similar advantages—there only wanted a judicious head and a resolute hand;—the people were susceptible of whatever impressions those in power were disposed to give them;—the people were blameless, let their errors be ever so great—the deceiving wise, not the credulous ignorant, the proper objects of contempt and disapprobation.

During all this time the Vicar was not idle; his adherents, his creatures, regularly

larly received and as regularly fulfilled his injunctions. The popularity of his friend was swelled to an astonishing height, and gold boxes, with the freedom of the first cities, courted his acceptance in his hour of supposed injury, in the hour of his supposed inactivity. But notwithstanding the Vicar's attendance upon his friend, his designs upon the innocent Clara were by no means renounced or defeated: a dangerous illness had made it impossible for Lord Windham to think of moving her for some months, and Mr. Arundel conceived, that the least assiduity he shewed upon the occasion, the least suspicion he should incur. The ministry which succeeded Mr. Windham, were not possessed of such shining abilities as to compensate, in the eyes of the public, for what they had lost. The squadron which had been detached by their favourite to the East-Indies, and another to Jamaica, were now despaired of effecting what he had

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planned. The Vicar caused it every where to be bruited that Mr. Windham had prepared an American supply, which would have been speedily remitted, if he had not been jockeyed out of his employment; nor did the merit of his obtaining the royal assent to the militia-bill, during his short administration, pass uncelebrated.

By the Vicar's address also was the navy brought at this juncture into the highest reputation.—It was not composed, he would observe, as heretofore, of the low and uninformed, but of men of incorruptible and enterprising spirits—liberal fortunes and liberal educations—inured to dangers, difficulties and hardships, and undebauched by the foppery, the coxcombry, which so glaringly distinguished the military tribe. No luxurious tents, no magnificent pavilions were the objects of their wishes or estimation. The Roman genius, however degenerated  
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in every other breast, lived strong in theirs; and as they were best calculated, so, if his friend had held the reins, they should have been most eminently employed in the service of their country.—All which sentiments were as eagerly imbibed as industriously propagated.

The king of Prussia now became the hero of the age.—His perseverance, his success against the Austrians, was too striking a contrast to the supineness of the British military, not to occasion great dissatisfaction in the political world. All was lawful game that the Vicar was capable of reaching, and provided he had an engine to play off, no matter whether it was borrowed from the Prussians or the French. Successive changes were every where rung upon the abilities, the valour of the Prussian monarch, and the Vicar secretly procured medals to be struck of this temporary deity. The bait was not to be resisted; an alliance with the king

of Prussia was the general voice.—It was the king of Prussia alone that could tame the haughty power of France, preserve us from domestic invasion, and save our American possessions from devastation. The Culloden hero, such is the caprice of human favour, was now little thought of, though in a most critical situation, though daily soliciting, and daily expecting the necessary supplies; though a voluntary exile for the defence of the country he loved, and though far beyond every possibility of enjoying the accommodation his birth and fortune intitled him to.—While the Prussian king's praises every where resounded, this hero of the year forty-six, who was reduced to the necessity of retreating as the enemy advanced, instead of striking a decisive blow, was wholly unassisted and wholly disregarded.

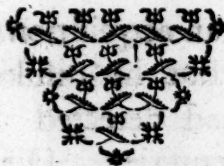
Mr. Windham exulted in his retreat; the American undertakings were all  
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unprosperous, the arrival of every fleet on every foreign destination untimely; and it was universally believed that these misfortunes would have been averted, if his power of action had remained.

Never did the face of things appear so formidable in Britain as at this conjuncture.—His majesty's distress was, beyond measure, complicated; bleeding for the miseries to which the kingdom of his nativity was exposed, and for the dangers which threatened the kingdom of his succession, he knew not what course to take.—Mr. Windham's understanding was an acquisition he would have rejoiced in, but he disliked his principles, and had detected him in some small disingenuities. His majesty was, however, too sensible to be obstinate, and too generous to sacrifice the public good to private pique, or private inclination; he desired to conciliate the affections of his people; their happiness was dearer to him than his own—he con-  
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158 VICAR OF BRAY.

temned all favouritism, but such as was founded on real worth, and from unexampled condescension conceived the general opinion might more safely be trusted than his own. Mr. Windham was therefore a third time invited to a participation in government, and the glad Vicar attended to increase the triumph and partake the gale.



CHAP.

## C H A P. XIV.

LORD Windham had too much cordiality for *good-natured* Ladies (and his Lordship had too just an opinion of Mrs. Arundel not to give her the utmost credit in that particular) to be surprised or offended at the long visit his friends and relations had made to his son's favourite. After the former he therefore enquired with the affection of a father, after the latter with the gallantry of a man of fashion, who knew life, and thought himself infinitely happy in such an agent as Arundel, both in his own amours and those of his family; for he looked upon the reconciling Lord Churchill to a *sensible* attachment, as a master stroke, from his possessing those principles of generosity and romance which must otherwise have exposed him to the greatest follies. As every thing was now completed for the  
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reception, and the accounts of Miss Clara Sidney's health not only favourable but perfectly satisfactory, the Earl begged Mr. Arundel would make her one more visit, and give her such impressions of his intentions as should induce her unreluctantly to exchange her present situation for any one he should chuse to propose to her. The visit was accordingly made, and the Lady's mind most artfully attacked, though not in the cause of right honourable *iniquity*. Mr. Arundel affected the deepest concern, and treated the unsuspecting girl with a reserve, yet with a tenderness she had never before observed in his behaviour. Having for some time watched the changes in his countenance, and revolved his extraordinary expressions, she took the alarm.—My good Sir, cried she, with the most engaging earnestness, what have you to communicate, that you are afraid I should hear? Have I lost my benefactor?—You shake your head

head—It must be so; but have I not lost a father long ago, to teach me submission to the will of Heaven?

For your sake, madam, returned the Vicar, notwithstanding my interest is so materially connected with that nobleman, and notwithstanding all the service he has rendered me, for your sake, I repeat, I could wish you were right in your conjectures;—but that the Earl of Windham lives is Miss Sidney's greatest misfortune, for he lives.—

Your friendship for me, Sir, said Miss Sidney, with the mild grace of pious resignation, occasions you to suffer without a cause.—Lord Windham has then withdrawn his protection; Lord Windham will no longer decorate the last remains of a poor old man with undue trappings; but let them go—I can thank him for the past, and unrepiningly submit to the future. I own it is a mis-

misfortune that I have been so elegantly bred. To unlearn, however, Mr. Arundel, cannot be a harder task than to learn; and if you can condescend to favour me with some little countenance, all shall yet be well with me.

How could it be possible, exclaimed the Vicar, with up-lifted eyes, for the greatest villian in existence to betray such an angel! and yet there is but one situation that can preserve that lovely person, that most amiable mind from inconveniencies; was I but some years younger, how should I exult in being able to offer you a legal protector! but the disparity of my years, the serious turn of my temper, and the gravity of that function to which I belong, can give no eligible impressions of me to the blooming bosom—yet, my Lord's base designs—

Spare me, cried Miss Sidney, covering her face with her hands, O! Sir, I beseech you, spare me the confusion, the distress,  
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the horror of that thought—and yet, recovering herself a little, tell me all—it is the guilty alone that ought to feel confusion: the purity of my own heart, and the purity of my own intentions, shall support me under the shocking information.

I came, then, my dear Miss Sidney, returned the *honest* Vicar, by his Lordship's peculiar command, to prepare you for what he is so abandoned as to call a life of affluence; but I am satisfied you will concur with me, that splendid infamy is only infamy so much the more conspicuous. Allow me, therefore, to add that I come with a full determination to offer you my hand, if you can condescend to accept it, my everlasting faith, my legal protection; this, and this only will be your security from innumerable designs of the same dreadfully ungenerous nature; for such is the disposition, the education, the principles

ciples of mankind, that the eminently lovely are ever marked down for their prey.

Miss Sidney, notwithstanding all her composure and firmness, could not suppress abundance of fears, from the idea of so much baseness in the man she had honoured, and the idea of the indignity she had sustained. The Vicar soothed her with all that could charm the imagination of refinement, made professions that would have fell not ungracefully from the lips of a divinity, and at length obtained a sweet confession from the most perfect of human hearts, that a whole life of the tenderest attention would be deemed an inadequate return for such great obligations.

This grand point gained, the Vicar instructed her in some methods of deception she herself could never have struck out, for the purpose of effectually defeating



defeating every endeavour of Lord Windham's to discover the place of her retreat.—He thought it most advisable for her to give the family she belonged to reason to apprehend she was forcibly carried off; promised to have a house ready for her reception, and provide a carriage and servants, in such a manner as to favour that wish, yet guard against every possibility of a pursuit. Then, taking his leave, left her to meditate on what had passed.

When arrived at Lord Windham's, he made such a report as he knew was best calculated to amuse that nobleman, when Lord Windham ventured to acknowledge to him, that he had long resolved to confer the dignity of countess upon the accomplished Miss Sidney.

Mr. Arundel was petrified at the sound.—However, there was still the same cause for exultation; it was impossible for any one to undeceive the  
lady

lady, or interrupt his schemes ; for, as no suspicion of him had ever been formed, he was certain to receive the first intimation of every ensuing step respecting her. He now debated with himself where he should convey her :—in a remote corner of the country, she might perhaps be less liable to discovery ; but then she would be beyond the reach of his visits : and indeed, such were the accidents of life, that some demon, the more precaution was used, might be the more industrious to reveal. He therefore determined to run into the danger to avoid the apprehension, and at least receive the price of disappointment and detection, if such were to be his fate. He had great reason to believe that Stepney was a town of all others the most secure from Lord Windham's knowledge. A small, but very convenient habitation was soon there obtained by him, and a couple of decent servants put into possession, and having acquainted Miss Sidney

Sidney when to expect the carriage, he found himself very impatient for the safe execution of his plan.

His apprehensions were all without foundation; the train of his measures were too well laid to fail of success. Miss Sidney, in the cause of virtue, in the cause of integrity, was an absolute heroine, and the Vicar, to convince her of his honour and his love, produced a licence (of his own drawing) immediately upon her arrival, and presented her one of his very best friends, as a man qualified to perform the sacred ceremony. The ceremony was accordingly performed, and the wretched Miss Sidney irreparably undone. It occurred to the Vicar that it would be best to apprise the earl at the earliest moment he could be supposed to have received intelligence of his loss, and flatter him with the hope of her being recovered; at the same time that he conceived it necessary to dispatch  
such

such a letter to the good people under whose care Miss Sidney had been situated, as should silence their enquiries, and remove their anxiety, without giving them the smallest information.

Lord Windham sunk under the news; his vanity or his love was too deeply wounded for him to support it; the agitation of his spirits soon brought on a violent attack of the gout, and his physicians declared him in the greatest danger. During a whole six weeks confinement, the Earl was so whimsical and petulant that he would not suffer the mention of a single affair to be made to him. Miss Sidney, the obtaining Miss Sidney, was the beginning and ending of all his wishes. The Vicar once presumed to ask him if he would not see Lord Churchill? He threw himself into a rage, and told him, such solemnities were only fit for dying men, and begged he might not be terrified.—In short, what-

VICAR OF BRAY. 169

whatever struck his imagination as gloomy, was rejected by him as his greatest evil, nor would he confess the most distant notion of death, untill his last breath was escaping him.

Thus fell the Earl of Windham, a victim to gallantry, after all the devastations he had committed; for had the Vicar understood his honourable intentions in due time, he durst not have proved an impediment to them, though there is little reason to believe that Miss Sidney could have yielded to his proposals, unless betrayed by a too nice sense of gratitude for a benefactor.

The Earl and Countess of Windham did not quit their beloved retirement, on the decease of their father, as no accounts reached them untill he was no more. They intreated Mr. and Mrs. Arundel would give them their company once again in the country; for,

VOL. I.

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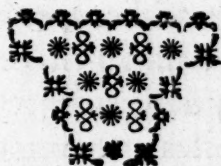
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from considering Mr. Arundel as the author of their felicity, they could with pleasure have laid kingdoms at his feet. But Mr. and Mrs. Arundel were in no degree disposed to accept their invitations, from having experienced how ill they were calculated to participate the rational satisfactions of that paradisaical spot. The natural turn of Lord Windham's disposition, together with the gentleness and humility of his wife's sentiments, had indeed constituted him a most extraordinary creature. The false lights and shades by which the *great* world are abused had with him no existence.—In the plainness of simplicity, and the purity of veracity, he beheld both causes and effects, and though his sensibility would not suffer him to degenerate into a misanthropist, he was in every degree what the undistinguishing call a humourist;—his dress was not regulated by fashion, but by convenience; his meals by the hours of the day, but  
the

## VICAR OF BRAY. 171

the demands of appetite, and his actions by reason, justice, and humanity; their life was consequently a life of pleasantness, and their bosoms ever more at peace.



## C H A P. XV.

**T**HE Vicar had no great difficulty, as Miss Sidney had no connexions, nor any curiosity for reading the public papers, to conceal the knowledge of Lord Windham's death, which, in his critical situation, was of the highest importance; for as Miss Sidney apprehended that Lord Windham was the only enemy she had in the world, and the only cause of her present obscurity, she would necessarily have expected to have been very differently accommodated, when all obstacles were removed.

Nothing was ever more exemplary than this unhappy young Lady's conduct in her deceived state; not a moment of her life but was devoted to the study of adding new charms either to her mind or person, for the sake of that man, whose happiness she held most sacred: nay  
such

## VICAR OF BRAY. 173

such is the force of virtue, that the Vicar's infernal soul frequently shrunk before it; when he beheld her all lovely and spotless as to every intentional crime, he could have wished that the crime of seduction had been his with fewer aggravations; but the bustles of politics on the one hand, and a natural propensity to guilt on the other, soon silenced all his compunctions.

The new arrangement of the ministry gave hope once more to the breasts of all kinds of people; for in appearance, by that new arrangement, the most jarring elements were reconciled for the public good, and though the eminence of power was evidently Mr. Windham's, his unassuming demeanour, the uncommon moderation of his conduct gave additional force to his other merits in the hearts of the populace. And here I cannot forbear observing, that happy would it have been for England, if this

had not been the almost only instance of a popular or royal favourite's bearing his consequence meekly, or of a sovereign's nobly disdaining to bring *self* into competition with the prosperity of his kingdom. But this favourite knew well the human construction, and never neglected the substance for the shadow; and this most gracious and ever to be revered sovereign had too just a sense of those best reins of government, the *affections* of the people, to suffer any act of his own to wrest them from his hands.

Mr. Windham fell to work with his wonted activity;—but there was so much to undo before any thing could be done, that nothing less than the indefatigable spirit with which he was endued, could have supported him in it. France was to the last degree victorious; Embden had been seized by one part of her army, and the other, having united several



veral detachments, gave chase to that ill-treated Prince the Duke of Cumberland, who passed the Weser for the security of his handful of men, and defeated him at Hastenbec ;—when finding the electorate wholly untenable, and himself deserted by his father's ministry, as there was no other measures to prevent the remaining few from becoming prisoners, he signed a convention of neutrality, distributed his troops into cantonments, and, with proper indignation, returned to England.

The Vicar and his patron, though so vigourously pushing their fame and interest under the elector of Hanover's auspices, had, in no degree, forgot their original disaffection; the sovereign was, indeed, too secure for their attacks, but the son, the brave, the once idolized son was now at their mercy, and though avarice and ambition were powerful springs in his breast, malignance, re-

venge, and a natural passion for persecuting the meritorious if unfortunate, were superior to both.

The convention was held forth in its most aggravated features to the deluded populace;— the court, the ministry, affected to disapprove what their neglect had rendered inevitable, and the same illustrious Prince, who, in the year forty-six, was hailed the saviour of Britain, was received with insults and indignities on his arrival from a station where he had experienced injustice, dishonour, danger and mortification.—Yes, to the everlasting reproach of the English, that very populace, who, with the loudest acclamations, had hung on his chariot wheels, and from grateful zeal had impeded his horses in their passage, now strove to excell each other in acts of outrage and insolence.— Fatigued in body, and dissatisfied in mind, dead cats and mud were thrown into his chaise

chaife as he passed through White-Chapel, in which worthy scene, and still more worthy transactions, the reverend Vicar had no inconsiderable share.—He was refused all access to the throne, refused every opportunity of explaining, much less of vindicating his conduct, and unable to bear unprovoked paternal, and unmerited national displeasure, unmoved, he took the military signature from his hat, and putting it into the hands of one of his faithful followers, bid him tell his father he was no longer a soldier, and retired to his palace at Windfor.

The Vicar was too deep read, as has already been observed, in the mystery of politics, not to understand their fluctuating and inconsistent nature.—The sun that declined to-day, was frequently only bidding the fairer to rise to-morrow with encreased lustre. He therefore whispered in his patron's ear, that a visit to the dis-

graced, the injured favourite, would recommend him to all parties. Besides all this, there was a wheel within a wheel, that the public were but little apprised of, and which, from a respect for the *free-masonry* of politics, I shall forbear revealing.—The visit was accordingly made, and a friendly intercourse established, much to the satisfaction of every person who was capable of peeping behind the political curtain; and though the populace were for a long time deceived, I need not inform my readers what reputation that Prince enjoyed with that very populace, at the unfortunate period of his decease.

Sir Edward Hawke was now preparing for his embarkation with the troops under his convoy on a most promising expedition, and Mrs. Arundel, though it may appear a much less important event, was at the same time preparing, in consequence of a most kind invitation,  
from

from her declining health, for the South of France. The fleet did embark, and Mrs. Arundel made her excursion.—The little isle of Aix was taken; but when the troops expected to be immediately put into action against Rochefort, a boat or two was sent out, and that for no other apparent purpose than the being recalled.—The enemy was alarmed, but not in the smallest degree annoyed, and after several little divertisements, the whole naval and military force returned home for farther orders.

The country was, by these strange proceedings and former disappointments, thrown into an universal ferment; the commanders, both naval and military, exclaimed against with the utmost virulence, and justice demanded, in peremptory terms, upon the delinquents. The officers, in order to exculpate themselves, threw the blame upon the ministry, and the ministry, by way of



amusing the incensed people, appointed that an enquiry should be made into the merits of the charge.—The enquirers gave it in favour of administration, and the military commander was branded with disobedience. A court-martial was, however, granted him, where, on the particular evidence of Sir Edward Hawke, he was acquitted, notwithstanding which the public favour was unrecovered by him; and what was very remarkable, the Vicar was the least busy on this miscarriage of any the nation had ever experienced.

The Vicar's inactivity was, nevertheless, but of short continuance; he found it necessary to exert his eloquence in his patron's defence, and evince, which he very soon did, that unless he acted solely, he could never become answerable for all the transactions of administration; that he had numberless enemies, only for having been the friend of his country,

- VICAR OF BRAY. 181

try, and that it must be needless to observe that malignant spirits were irresistible, and would hesitate at nothing to gain their point; that rather than not tear him from the hearts of the populace, they would involve the whole kingdom in destruction, provided they could, in the smallest degree, mark him down for the author.

The multitude, as usual, heard, believed, and were convinced; Mr. Windham was again their idol, and once more enabled to abuse their confidence.

Mrs. Arundel at length alarmed by the ill successes of her niece, and still more alarmed at the growing expence in her accommodation, fixed her eye upon Miss Louisa's rational admirer, as a good dupe, if properly managed; accordingly it was settled, that as soon as she returned from the country, Miss Needham should affect indisposition—  
absent

absent herself wholly from the great world, and affect a wonderful taste for domesticity.

Miss Needham had many objections to the scheme—the siege might be a tedious one, and how could she exist at a distance from the vitals of her existence? Should any disappointment intervene, would not her artifice transpire, and could she ever shew her face again where she delighted so much to be seen? but it was her dernier resort—and she was compelled to make a virtue of necessity. A certain duke however found her so encouraging, that he ventured to enter very spiritedly into her train; and it was whispered—historians have nothing to do with whispers, facts only can be registered in their annals.

His grace was both a husband and a father; but he was too fashionable not to despise the first character, and too well

VICAR OF BRAY. 183

well bred to do honour to the last—his wife and children were the only persons in the world that could complain of his want of tenderness or attention: nor, though these were circumstances pretty notorious, was he by any means the worse received by women of the nicest refinement, or most eminent reputation.

Yet notwithstanding this very customary, this very improper conduct, the ladies would be highly offended, if their delicacy, or their honour, was to be called in question, but upon the most flagrant proofs. You are not in this very polite age to trust the evidences of your own senses—you must take up your opinion upon the credit of others, and not once believe, that where a lady has not the resolution to avoid the flattery, she cannot have any very moral objections to the man. The duke was however so well pleased with Miss Needham's behaviour, that he presented her  
some



some very magnificent tokens of his gratitude—a diamond rose stomacher, and many other articles, which she would otherwise never have been mistress of; and it was so much to her aunt's satisfaction, that she applauded his grace's generosity no less than her niece's wisdom, and set it down as a clear point, that if he had been free from prior claims upon his title, that, together with his person, would have been bestowed where his heart was so apparently devoted. There is no such thing as contradicting these strange fancies, unless it was possible to remove every supposed obstacle, or was even that the case, might it not be asserted that he had changed his mind by delays? and that though he would have married her on his first acquaintance, the novelty ceasing, and his recollection returning, he thought proper to act a contrary part.

The



The snare had been laid for Mr. Davenport so successfully, that he even rejoiced that he had been refused by Louisa, for to all the beauties of her disposition, in this instance, was superadded a very engaging person, and the most heavenly sweetness of disposition. The wedding preparations were carried on with infinite spirit;—an equipage, a house in the most polite stile was provided for her accommodation, and Mr. Windham deigned to smile with uncommon graciousness upon the object of her choice. Poor Mr. Davenport, how miserably was he imposed upon! the heart he was seeking to engage, by numberless acts of generosity, knew only to despise him, and to laugh at every worthy, every noble principle: from the moment he was hook'd in, to the moment of his nuptials, was one continued scene of deception and fraudulent practices; nor was he suffered to have connection with a single creature that could have

have betrayed their real character to him. The appointed day at last arrived,—to church went the Vicar, his patron, and his wife, to be witnesses to the accomplishment of their fine work, and the Lady returned Mrs. Davenport.

Having received and repaid her round of visits, her husband gently intimated his desire to quit town; but she peremptorily insisted upon it, that those only who had an objection to continue in it, should leave it; and that, as she did not wish to put a restraint upon his inclinations, she did hope she had nothing of the kind to apprehend from him. He now, for the first time, began to perceive his error, but conscious that it was too late to retrieve it, he still persisted to soothe her into compliance; but all he was able to obtain was a kind of compromise, that if she was indulged the present winter, he should be consult-

ed the next. It is very natural to suppose that a man endued with every social, every rational propensity, could not but be exceedingly wretched with a woman of so opposite a turn of sentiments. The Vicar and Mr. Windham would endeavour to keep him in good humour in the absence of his Lady, but neither absence or presence afforded the expected felicity. Her party was, indeed, strong against him; he was a Hottentot with the belles, and a Barbarian with the beaux; nor did she scruple to pick a subject for ridicule out of him wherever she went. A woman of spirit is a most *amiable* creature! to destroy those they are bound to save, to impair the fortune to which they have not contributed a shilling, and plant thorns about the pillow of him whose repose they ought to hold most sacred, are some of the inferior feats they hourly accomplish; dead to every worthy compunction, and ashamed only of what has any tincture of

188 VICAR OF BRAY.

of propriety, they flutter through life, adorn the picture-shop windows, and consequently are conceived most befitting examples for the rising generation—for is not to celebrate, to applaud?



CHAP.

## C H A P. XVI.

**D**URING this whole period, the Vicar continued prosperous in guilt; but as security is the parent of negligence, the parent of destruction, so from security did this most sagacious of all deceivers insensibly begin to relax one of his strictest points of prudence, uninterrupted sobriety. Had Miss Sidney known more of the world and mankind, she had not been so long a stranger to her melancholy fate; but the goodness of her heart prevented all suspicion, untill, in one of these unguarded moments, she discovered that Lord Windham was dead.

Her nice sensibility was deeply wounded, to find that the man she had made of so much consequence to her, whose joys and whose inconveniences she had so abundantly shared, should think her un-



unworthy of being introduced to his friends. She tried the matter a thousand different ways,—was he unwilling to hurt the son, by publishing the errors of the father,—was he afraid of incurring the censure of the world for having united himself to an unprotected, an unportioned girl, or did he really think her unqualified for polite scenes?—She was unable to fix upon any probable reason, yet forbore communicating her dissatisfaction, lest he should impute it to vanity, ingratitude, or self-sufficiency, more especially as she found he had great business upon his hands to call off his attentions from the mere ceremonials of life.

The Vicar's genius was, indeed, pretty well exercised at this period:—many failures had transpired in political matters to work upon the minds of the unhappy multitude. Amongst the rest, American affairs, in however promising  
a state

a state in their beginning, wore but a mortifying aspect. Mr. Arundel had, nevertheless, the good fortune to secure his patron, not only from all disgrace, but, by a happy attention to the chronological art, contrived, inconceivably, to advance his reputation—for he soon made it appear intelligible to the meanest capacities, that the spirited opening was wholly Mr. Windham's; the languor, the remissness, the succeeding ministry's. He likewise whispered in every ear he could reach, that a descent upon Louisburg, which bid defiance to all impediments, had been concerted by this most indefatigable of men; nay, that the returned fleet were dispatched for that glorious purpose, but what kind of figure their inactivity, he added, would make in the annals of Great Britain, or the immense expence the nation had so uselessly sustained, he should be very unwilling to suggest the faintest idea, only think, he would in the same moment  
cry,

cry, with proper significance of features, and a marvelling indignant accent, of such an important, such a powerful force, both naval and military, yet not a single stroke struck: the French fleet too, that they would obtain so unhoped for an opportunity of making their desired port, instead of meeting with the destruction they were exposed to; and to complete the whole, what a shattered and distressed condition did we receive them in from the hand of Providence, though, indeed, storms were not to be guarded against!

Whilst the Vicar thus triumphed in the success of his eloquence (for his audience were never wanting in credulity) Mrs. Arundel, it was reported as a piece of secret history, made a very considerable purchase in the funds, was apparently the most brilliant of many brilliant circles, and had a levy equal at least to the first minister's in the kingdom.

The

## VICAR OF BRAY. 193

The consequences of this extraordinary conduct of the forces sent out, whatever was the source, were most dreadful, miserable accounts continually arrived; their best forts fell a prey to the enemy, conquest and devastation threatened them from every quarter, and amongst their other misfortunes, Fort William Henry was lost.

The Vicar knew well what he was about.—It was an inexpressible aggravation, he would say, of the ministerial cabals, that Fort William Henry, which the general could not be ignorant was too thinly provided for a defence, had not been reinforced by a detachment from the unemployed troops; but he presumed it was their orders to come home to be *reviewed*. How unprecedented, how unpardonable such neglect, he would say, and what lamentable effects has it not been productive of! The savage acts committed by the besiegers,

VOL. I.

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when



when the unhappily besieged were unable longer to resist, so shocking to the mind of humanity! Could it be either uncharitable or presumptuous to suppose those would be found unanswerable for them, by whose bad management they had been occasioned? In a word, by a judicious exercise of the means, accidental misapprehension, or, as it was shrewdly suspected, his own treachery had furnished him with, he so disposed the hearts of the people, that his patron's smallest merits must appear to infinite advantage from the contrast; light and shade how essential to each other!

Mr. Windham, anxious to avail himself of the Vicar's industry, yet no less anxious to retain the favour of his Sovereign, resolved by alternate attentions to the continental and provincial interest, to keep the balance to his wishes.

The



## VICAR OF BRAY. 195

The King of Prussia had unceasingly been played off by the Vicar : in his exigencies, in his victories, the colourings were equally strong; admiration and compassion insensibly united in the breasts of the public; admiration and compassion was the union he sought to produce.— Now they exulted in his success, and now they felt themselves depressed by his misfortunes, in so much that little more was wanting to engage their most vigorous assistance—such is the *free-masonry* of politics, as it may justly, and I have repeatedly called; for none but the mighty few have the smallest conception of what they are about, or what may possibly be the termination. The honest, the deluded people conceived they were acting a noble, a voluntary part, instead of which, not a step, an inclination, or resolution was their own, but madly imbibed from the prime minister's prime agent — and in the very moment they fancied themselves most free, they were

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merely

196 VICAR OF BRAY.

merely like so many puppets dancing to his miserable wires.

The battle of Rosbach still raising the reputation of the Prussian hero, the disadvantages the English incurred were utterly unperceived by them, though unperceived by them alone. It was now that the Hanoverians were encouraged to resume their arms—and so delighted was the British House of Commons with their spirited conduct, that they unanimously voted a hundred thousand pounds for their present support—though at the period of this their generosity, the honour, the fame, the commerce and the liberty of England were wounded and expiring from inattention.

The Hanoverians had the good sense to reap the utmost benefit of their improved condition; the convention, the compulsive convention entered into by the Duke of Cumberland had long since  
been

been broken by the French—their territories to the utmost verge plundered and despoiled; no wonder therefore that they were eager to revenge themselves on so perfidious an enemy.

The French, though without intending it, promoted the Hanoverian cause against themselves; several dislodgements had been made by the allies, and on a reinforcement from the Prussian monarch, they were pushed so close, as to be obliged to retreat with precipitance: destroying and ravaging the places through which they passed, and to their eternal stigma, as a master stroke, in all the wantonness of cruelty setting fire to the orphan house of Zeli, replete with unoffending and helpless inhabitants; an action which seemed to render their chastisement not the Hanoverian cause, but the cause of humanity.

The Hanoverians, on the resumption of their arms, felt no inconsiderable mortification to find themselves without a leader. The duke of Cumberland's probity, the duke of Cumberland's martial abilities appeared in a most captivating light to their imaginations; but the duke of Cumberland had been treated with too much indignity and injustice by the British ministry, when fighting in defence of the British dominions, ever to be prevailed upon to engage in any more military expeditions.. Their exigencies, their necessities were at length conveyed to the ear of Prussian royalty, who immediately recommended his dearly beloved brother, and most experienced officer, Prince Ferdinand to their favour; and his dearly beloved brother was accordingly hailed their general. I would by no means be understood to arraign the merits of Prince Ferdinand's military character; but Prince Ferdinand could not be supposed to have the interest of the  
English



English much at heart.—It was nevertheless his engagement to press hard upon the French, and so far did he adhere to it in the first instance, that they were compelled totally to abandon the Electorate.

This circumstance was naturally very acceptable with his Majesty; nor did the diligent Vicar fail to render it universally so. The French were become objects of detestation. The French were humbled, the French were in a degree overcome, and Prince Ferdinand was therefore constituted the second toast in every ale-house, the second idol of the infatuated populace of Great-Britain.

This humour, so propitious to the foreign sufferers, and so long wished to be produced, was not neglected by Mr. Windham. Our naval forces were now openly dispatched to assist that cause, we had at a former period so loudly decried,



as of all others the most detrimental to our domestic interests — and so superlatively generous did the English prove themselves, that they forgot their recent discontents, their recent losses, their recent disappointments, and with bonfires and illuminations celebrated the retaking of Embden by Commodore Holmes, — though the retaking of Embden was no more than opening a port for the reception of future aids from England, at the expence of her own safety — so little was the proverb in esteem that *charity should begin at home*.

May no Historian in his wrath dwell upon the particulars of that frantic period. — May no Historian in his wrath prepare a page that must call forth a blush on the cheek of our latest posterity. — O ! may it never be told, that when the most wretched *omissions*, or the most abominable *treachery*, had involved us in unspeakable difficulties, we could  
so

so far fail in the duties we owed to ourselves, our children, and our country, as to be capable of the most extravagant revellings on the birth-day of an imaginary, or at best temporary hero, whose delight, whose trade was war, and who never bestowed a single thought on *us*, unmingled with self-interest, ridicule, or contempt.



## C H A P. XVII.

**M**R. Windham having thus gained so material a point, conceived it incumbent upon him, by way of keeping the scale even, to pursue or rather revive some of his plans respecting America.

In an instant Mr. Windham shone forth the guardian god of the provinces, and Germany, as if by magic power, received the unalarming complexion of the secondary object of ministerial consideration.

Mrs. Arundel, who constantly corresponded with Lady Windham, and had given her repeated invitations to revisit London, now renewed them with such success, that she received information, that, accompanied by her Lord, she was determined to be with her in a few days.

The Vicar's malice, and Mr. Windham's love; were revived by the news. Mr. Windham's public character exposed him to abundant fatigues, and as his own home had no charms for him, he rejoiced to think he should be enabled to pass his more retired hours, in conversing with his long admired Sophia, the most accomplished of women.

As the Vicar had on a former occasion raised the expectations of the public with regard to Louisbourg, the reduction of Louisbourg became the object of Mr. Windham's contemplation; and that he might not hazard the loss of his enterprise by ill-timing the embarkation of the destined forces, they were dispatched as early as the beginning of February.

The French did all they could to defeat this scheme, but were unsuccessful: their fleet intended to annoy the English were destroyed; Louisbourg taken, and

Lord and Lady Windham arrived in London quite a-propos to share the general joy, and join in the general congratulations Mr. Windham was considered as intitled to, on his wisdom and his abilities having been so happily directed.---As to the gratitude of the lower orders of the people, it did not fall much short of absolute deification. Mr. Windham's nerves were however luckily strong enough to sustain all these mighty shocks of popular adulation; nor was he ever once surpris'd into a breach of that moderation, that speciousness of behaviour which had so won upon the public favour, and so confirmed the public voice.

Lady Windham, whose gentle nature shuddered at the bare idea of the miseries, the carnage of war, and whose anxiety for the safety of Colonel Weston, and his young friend, from their being eminently concerned in the military part of the enterprise, was exceeding lively; expressed



pressed much dissatisfaction that war in all ages should be as it were the business of the human species !

My dear, said Lord Windham, if you could but persuade the world to examine circumstances and events with a rational eye, your humanity would be secured from the frequent wounds it now experiences: the golden age would be once more restored, and peace, the constant companion of mankind; but the policy of tyrants has otherwise decreed, notwithstanding there are such large tracks in every country uncultivated and uninhabited. The tyrant no sooner beholds his dominions populate, than he sends forth his thousands, and his ten thousands to be slaughtered in the field.---Evident and incontestable as this fact is, continued his Lordship, it is with astonishment that I find the spirit of heroism existing in the very bosom of slavery---and yet the monarch's of France can truly boast of  
many

many brave officers. The English indeed, when they draw the sword, have a noble incitement---the defence of their liberty, the defence of their property---the English, from having much to lose, have much to guard---and the English could never at any period be charged with drawing the sword on less justifiable principles.

Mr. Windham and the Vicar exchanged a kind of sympathetic smile--the Earl's simplicity producing one and the same sensation in each of their breasts; and their mental interjection was, Oh how little is this harmless peer acquainted with courts, courtiers, and the meanders of politics!

Lady Windham had never been in London, but in a retired situation. Lady Windham was consequently much astonished at the scenes to which her nobility and connexions had introduced her.

Where-

Wherever she went, her husband was her never-failing attendant—the beaux laughed, the belles blessed themselves—but she was proof against the folly of fashion, and the sneer of the little minded—nor would she have foregone the satisfaction of her husband's company for all the adulation in the universe.

Miss Louisa, with all her fund of vivacity, and seeming love of life, would not be prevailed upon to quit her venerable Mrs. Westley but in short excursions, and declared herself more than compensated for all the gay world afforded, in the conversations of reason, and the offices of friendship and humanity.

Mr. Windham, that he might not lose on the one hand what he had gained on the other, thought it now necessary to cast a friendly eye upon continental affairs—but lest, when the reigning transports

sports should subside, dissatisfaction on observing him in his true character might take place — the Vicar was enjoined by actual report or bold insinuations, so artfully to work upon the humour of the populace, that they themselves should eagerly solicit the very conduct he, Mr. Windham, was predetermined to pursue.

With this view the Vicar, wherever he came, warmly entered into a description of the manifold advantages of a litoral war, and proved beyond a doubt, that if Prince Ferdinand was duly reinforced, the French would not only be annoyed, but pressed and pushed to the very gates of Paris.

Your English commonalty have infinite delight in the marvellous. — The French monarch already tottered on his throne, and so successful was this finesse, that Mr. Windham found himself compelled

pelled, to either espouse the German interest, or forfeit the hearts both of his sovereign and the people.—He made a very long, and very judicious speech upon the occasion — professed himself (though all reluctant) yet all incapable of resisting the general voice, and as he was master at once of the happiest lines and happiest accents, his elocution was never vainly exercised.

Lord Windham could not immediately comprehend this double system of politics — it either *was* or *was not* for the good of Britain to follow continental measures, and that in the *positive* degree. He insisted upon it, that a faithful minister, instead of foregoing, or yielding an important point, ought bravely to maintain it, though the loss of his post, and the loss of public favour should be the consequence — for that to be intimidated or over-ruled, was to be highly culpable; for was it not to desert his principles



principles, and sacrifice the people? and he would add, the applause of thousands had little to soothe the patriot, unless the patriot's heart joined its honest testimony to the justice of their application of them, and the justice of his claim.

Mr. Windham did not chuse to be too explicit with a man of Lord Windham's romantic ideas and sentiments—with a modesty truly amiable, and no less truly exemplary, he therefore only observed, that it was more probable for a single judgment to err, than that the judgment of multitudes should be found erroneous; and though he must confess himself incapable of seeing things in the light they appeared to the general optics of the kingdom, it might be happy for his country (that everlasting idol of his affections, and object of his care) that the populace had sufficient spirit and resolution to compel him to adopt their inclinations, and the inclinations of his sovereign, for his rule of action.

Lord

Lord Windham shook his head from the extravagant opinion, that the man in whose composition, discernment and firmness had not an abundant share, was of all others the most unfit man for public employments; for if England was to be lost, whether complimentary or mercenary motives were the cause, he could perceive but small difference.

Mr. Windham having had his laugh at the expence of the peer, in a *tete-a-tete* with his agent the Vicar, resolved to pursue his schemes with the spirit for which he had so long been distinguished, and which could never fail to captivate the imagination of the vulgar.

The treaty with Prussia was strengthened and confirmed with many additional (and for that monarch very advantageous) articles; nor were the supplies obtained for the neighbourly purpose less considerable than to the amount of 1,861,891*l*. This it must be allowed was a most happy  
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and patriotic measure, and contributed in an essential degree towards lessening the national debt, and at the same time enabled us to prosecute our expensive and important designs in America.--The measures, the supplies, had however the sanctifying seal of Mr. Windham's approbation, and not a censure, not a murmur was heard.

Circumstances and events, ever favourable to the wishes of this statesman, continued still their pleasing operations---Cherbourg was taken---the English rejoiced---the French were pushed to the banks of the Rhine, by the brave Prince Ferdinand (though upon *Hessian* principles) the English were wanton in his praises; nay the brave Prince Ferdinand crossed that river in pursuit of the enemy, and formed his motions so judiciously, that on the third of June, he gained an important advantage at Crevell, and Dusseldorp was surrendered to him. It was then expected by the exulting people

people that Prince Ferdinand would have entered the French dominions, and by proper gradations led on his victorious troops to the very metropolis---but Prince Ferdinand was too honourable, and too experienced a politician, not to grant his neighbours a short breathing-time (an indulgence inseparable to all true generalship, when the spirit of the campaign is wished to be preserved) in which friendly period having collected a powerful force under the command of the Duke de Soubise, the face of affairs was very soon changed, and the Parisian territories secured from the threatened devastation.---The English were nevertheless convinced by the honest Vicar's representation, that it could not be otherwise, and were brought to admire the wisdom and vigilance of prince Ferdinand, by his opposing an adequate body to that advancing under the conduct of Soubise; the command of which was given by him to the prince of Ysenburg. The prince of Ysenbur

Ysenburg might possess the first military abilities, tho' he happened not to be of the number of fortune's favourites---the duke de Broglio, like another Alexander, came up with him, saw, and conquered; nor did the duke de Broglio omit improving his victory to the utmost. The junction of the British troops belonging to the duke of Marlborough, was by this means rendered wholly impracticable.— Consequently all the *Dukes* except this in the service of his Catholic Majesty were dreadfully embarrassed; until one of the French generals, from principles of politeness, conceiving this the happiest of all opportunities for returning Prince Ferdinand's compliment, delivered them from their difficulties, and enabled them to add another wreath to the laurels they had already obtained---but in this place, for the honour of the English, I cannot help observing, that they were as forward to promote contributions for the unsuccessful, as the successful commander,



er, well knowing, and generously considering, that neither the one, nor the other is dependant upon the choice or power of any man in existence.

The complaisant Frenchman however was too modest to assume any merit to himself upon the occasion---his views, as he told the story, being nothing more than the retaking of Dusseldorp; but as that project failed, he had struck out the equally flattering, though equally fruitless one of surprising Baron Imhoff, and cutting his little army in pieces. Baron Imhoff nevertheless escaped the snare, and by making a happy disposition of his small force, gave the French general a most unexpected reception---a defeat was the consequence, and the Baron by spirited marches, immediately on this success, effected an union with the duke of Marlborough, and with the other allies. But notwithstanding this gleam of prosperity, a succession of losses, imputed  
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by the Vicar to the abundant reinforcement of the French army, obliged the allies to terminate the campaign, very little to their satisfaction. What Prince Ferdinand possessed, he was compelled to forego on the approach of the bad season. The English troops in particular suffered much by fatigue and sickness, and the duke of Marlborough was himself carried off by a dysentery at Munster.

Nor were the American attacks, admirable soever as they were proclaimed, closed without a melancholy catastrophe. Soon after the Cherbourg expedition, and the reunion of the fleet and land forces, which, on the debarkation of the latter, were for a long time separated by hard gales, a descent was unfortunately resolved upon, and as unfortunately carried into execution on St. Maloes---for when the troops had but just gained the shore, some dissatisfaction from difference of opinion arising amongst the commanders,

ers, and which did not subside until the surf gathered to a great height, Commodore Howe found himself obliged to quit the bay, for that of St. Cas. The army and fleet thus deprived of each other's support, the former became an easy prey to the enemy, who bearing down upon them, unprepared as they were for their reception, and compelling them to an immediate engagement, the officers found they had nothing for it but a speedy retreat; their fire, and their resistance were altogether unavailing; and their bravery, and their slaughter only similar. Many in desperation cast themselves into the sea, chusing rather to perish meanly, than grace the triumphs of a cruel foe; nor has the loss the English sustained on that occasion, been ever fully stated even to this day. This was a blow miserable Britain could not be insensible of; she drooped the head, and exultation, for a short period, was

no more. Had such repeated misfortunes been incurred under any other administration, the violence, the rage of the populace would have been irrestrainable---the judicious, the feeling part of the public would have cast themselves at the feet of majesty, to solicit vengeance for their wrongs, and if unredressed by sovereign interposition, the more daring, and worse principled would not have hesitated to lift the hand against the very life of him that had wrought out their destruction---but it was their favourite, it was their eloquent Mr. Windham who presided at the helm---the blood of their countrymen was bartered for a few fair words, and a nation suffered to languish, to expire, for the pleasure of reading the language of speciousness, the language of artifice, the language of self-gratification. It is true, Mr. Windham's worst enemies could not fix a stain upon his character; he was too wise, and too much  
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the man of honour to work himself, and his agent, with his agent's agents, were too happily chose for him to have any thing to fear: therefore was the smile of complacence ever more preserved on his countenance, and the honey of smooth epithets dwelt at all times upon his lips. Many ministers have been equally popular, many ministers have been equally successful, many ministers have been equally vigilant, and many ministers have been equally serviceable to their country, but no minister, except Mr. Windham, could *ruin*, yet preserve themselves from blame; no minister except Mr. Windham could ever boast of the warmest testimonies of the people's approbation, in the moment that he was *baring* the knife against their bosoms, and their peace; nor could any minister except Mr. Windham have introduced that most gross absurdity, that the fighting our neighbour's battles was fighting our own, with universal credu-



20 VICAR OF BRAY.

lity and universal satisfaction. Such nevertheless are the triumphs of Mr. Windham's administration, and such most assuredly has been the folly, the abuse of the people.



C H A P.

VICAR OF BRAY. 221

C H A P. XVIII.

**M**R. Arundel relieved by the closing of the campaign from intense labour, Miss Sidney began to think it no unfit season for satisfying her doubts, and removing her dissatisfactions; not that she in the remotest degree suspected she had been betrayed, or, at worst, had been other than neglected by her husband.

The Vicar one evening, on his arrival at Stepney, perceived care and anxiety on that countenance where the Loves and Graces seemed most peculiarly to revel; he very naturally therefore enquired into the cause. Mr. Arundel, resumed the Lady, rather emphatically, I fear I have been deceived---you flattered me that I was of the utmost consequence to your happiness, and should share your reputation and fortune---the Earl of Windham is dead.

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What can you mean ? exclaimed the arch fiend ; I shook hands with his lordship within this half hour : can the woman of my heart, and the delight of my eyes, at this time of day, question either my faith or truth ?

I was prepared for mortification, said Miss Sidney, but not the mortification I find I must experience ; you do not treat me quite kindly ; it was yourself, Mr. Arundel, in an hour of intoxication, that let the secret escape you, which otherwise, I find, was not designed for my ear. I have supported—but we will talk no more of it.

Mr. Arundel was by no means pleased with this conversation ; he well knew how little his conduct would bear the test of enquiry, and there was something of a determined, though unoffending air about the lady that seemed to imply that she was not to be trifled with. He, however, thought

thought it wisest to take her at her word, for he remembered the good observation of Solomon, that in silence there was safety, and by introducing a succession of lively or interesting subjects, divert her mind totally from one that threatened very unpleasant consequences.

But Miss Sidney, though she could have forgiven actual unkindness, could not forgive this attempt to impose upon her, but, catching the mode from him, affected a composure she could not feel, and the vicar parted from her the next morning with apparent confusion.

Miss Sidney, now convinced that there was some extraordinary mystery in his proceedings, and unable to endure the tortures of suspense, dressed herself in the plainest manner possible, and having sent for a hackney coach, ordered the man to drive to a milliner's in the neighbourhood of St. James's, whom she had

often heard the Vicar mention with approbation, and from whom he had frequently brought her very valuable presents. Mrs. Raymond no sooner understood she was Mr. Arundel's acquaintance than she was profuse in her civilities, assured her that she had the best set of customers in the world through his interest, Mr. Windham and his lady, Lady Windham and her Lord, Mrs. Westly and Miss Wentworth, and, not the least considerable though last mentioned, Mrs. Arundel herself.

The innocent Miss Sidney, from applying the compliment according to her comprehension of it, returned her bow of acknowledgement, and, having consented to take a dish of coffee, endeavoured to lead the really intelligent and good-natured Mrs. Raymond, into further particulars—and pray madam, said she, since I find you are so well acquainted with



VICAR OF BRAY. 225

with the family, how long has the old earl been dead?

O! madam, returned Mrs. Raymond, a vast while; a fit of the gout carried him off, and Mr. and Mrs. Arundel had much fatigue with him during his illness.

Miss Sidney felt an involuntary trembling, and could only repeat, Mrs. Arundel, madam—

I thought you had known her, said Mrs. Raymond; she is a fine, fat, good-natured lady as any in the whole world, and dresses—Mrs. Raymond was enlarging upon the merits of her customer with uncommon pleasure and volubility, when looking up she perceived her guest in a swoon and totally insensible. She rung for assistance, but all assistance was for some time vain, and the whole house despaired of her ever recovering more: at length, however, the unfortunate and amiable

amiable creature opened her eyes ; does the coach wait ? demanded she ; I would be conveyed from hence home. The people, exceedingly affected by her distress and illness, intreated that she would not think of leaving them untill she was better, or at least that some one of them might be permitted to attend her home. Mr. Arundel does not live far from here, said Mrs. Raymond. Do not name him, madam, cried the wretched Miss Sidney ; he *knows* me not, nor shall he ever behold me again ; if you will kindly assist me to the carriage which brought me to the door, I will return you my best thanks. The carriage was instantly called, but the good-natured Mrs. Raymond would insist upon going some part of the way with her to see how the motion of the coach agreed with her, and promised to leave her the moment she wished to be alone. Happy was it for Miss Sidney that she fell into such humane hands ; she had frequent returns of her faintings, during

during which, Mrs. Raymond supported her in her arms, and at length prevailed upon her to stop at a house in the way to take some refreshment. I would not be impertinent for all the world, said she, but there is much to interest in your appearance and behaviour; if I could be serviceable—tears were all the answer she obtained, till starting from a profound reverie, can you, said Miss Sidney, can you enable me to conceal myself from all the world? do you know where the wretched may find an asylum? for I am only wretched; to guilt, thank heaven! I am as yet a stranger: I have one hundred pounds that I can call my own; I would subsist upon it until I am somewhat recovered, if I knew but where to hide this miserable head.

Only be composed, madam, said Mrs. Raymond, and leave the rest to me. We have hours sufficient before us, if it will  
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not be too much for your strength, and I will convey you where you shall be most kindly treated.

Let us go this instant, cried the weeping girl; I have my little treasure always about me; it was the last, the dying present of a most affectionate father; little did he think what a sad purpose it would answer; a hundred pound note, madam, was all he had to leave, and I have been so circumstanced ever since, as to have preserved it unbroken; I am now quite easy, quite resigned, and will consider you as my better angel for the services you will render me.

Mrs. Raymond, struck with the beauty and innocence of Miss Sidney, set her down in her own mind for a young creature the Vicar had formed designs upon, and therefore thought the best means of saving her would be to put her under the protection of those who were in some degree

degree connected with him ; she accordingly gave the coachman orders to drive to the village where Mrs. Westly and Miss Louisa Wentworth lived, and acquainting them with her suspicions, soon gained their protection of her. Miss Sidney was inconceivably distressed when she discovered the step Mrs. Raymond had taken ; but Louisa, with all the sweet persuasion of humanity and tenderness, besought her to repose upon their bosoms. We will neither betray you to Mr. Arundel, said she, nor enquire more into your own family affairs than you may wish to reveal : Mr. Arundel never visits here, and as for Lord and Lady Windham, I can answer for their meeting with your utmost approbation ; but have you no father, mother, friends ? O ! not one of all you have mentioned, said Miss Sidney, am I blessed with ; I will, however, added she after a pause, with your permission, board in your neighbourhood, and when acquaintance shall



shall have taught you how to esteem me perhaps I may find some tolerable felicity. Mrs. Raymond took her leave, highly satisfied with having snatched a young creature from destruction, and promised to be as secret as the grave.

The good Mrs. Westly beheld the lovely girl with the utmost kindness, and, though a lodging had been taken for her at a neighbouring farmer's, insisted that she should spend that night at her house; we will soothe, said she to Louisa, we will save her: in which generous resolution Miss Louisa most warmly concurred.

The Vicar was too much alarmed by Miss Sidney's behaviour not to make her an early visit; but how was she astonished when he found she was gone beyond his utmost reach! he was enraged; he was disappointed; but it was not convenient to betray too much of either the one or the other; he therefore resolved to sit  
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VICAR OF BRAY. 231

down quietly with his loss, and as love could no longer fill up his vacant hours, he determined to welcome hatred and revenge once more to his breast. Lady Windham was with him the unmerited object of both those dire passions ; Lady Windham was consequently marked down on the *black* leaf of his heart. Every thing was settled at Stepney with all possible secrecy ; the servants gratified and discharged, to purchase their silence ; the goods and house transferred to a brother, to make what advantage he could of them, and the Vicar took an everlasting leave of that most awkward of situations.

E N D of V O L. I.



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